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THE YALE UNIVERSITY DRAMATIC ASSOCIATION, 1908.



REVIZÓR

A COMEDY

BY

NIKOLAS V. GOGOL

TRANSLATED FOR

THE YALE UNIVERSITY
DRAMATIC ASSOCIATION

By MAX S. MANDELL

Instructor in Russian at Yale University

WITH AN INTRODUCTION

By WILLIAM LYON PHELPS

Lamson Professor of English Literature at Yale University



NEW HAVEN, CONN.

PUBLISHED UNDER THE SUPERVISION OF

CHARLES PASCAL FRANCHOT, 1910



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1911

THIS VOLUME IS RESPECTFULLY DEDICATED TO
PRESIDENT ARTHUR T. HADLEY,
IN THE FIRST YEAR OF WHOSE ADMINISTRATION
THE YALE UNIVERSITY DRAMATIC ASSOCIATION WAS
FOUNDED, AND WHO HAS BEEN TO THE ORGANIZATION
A FAITHFUL AND POWERFUL FRIEND.

NOTE.—In publishing this Acting Version of "Revizór" the Yale University Dramatic Association does not use a literal translation of the Russian text, but rather one that is freely abridged and adapted to suit the needs of an American production.

PREFACE.

The policy of the Yale University Dramatic Association is to select for the annual spring performances plays which belong to standard literature and at the same time are seldom, if ever, mounted on the professional stage. In selecting for 1908 Gogol's *Revizór* it is believed that both these purposes are fulfilled; for so far as I have been able to discover, the Yale presentation will be the first ever given anywhere in English; and as to the position in world literature of this drama, it is universally admitted to be the finest play in the Russian language.

Mr. Max Mandell, Instructor in Russian in the University, to whose generosity and kindness all students of the Russian language and literature at New Haven already owe so much, has translated the entire work directly from the original, for the use of the Yale University Dramatic Association; but it should be noted here that in publishing this acting version the Dramatic Association has freely adapted and abridged Mr. Mandell's translation with a view to making it more effective for an American stage performance.

In preparing the few words that I have written as an *Introduction* I have consulted volumes that are mentioned in the *Bibliography*; but my chief and constant obligation is to the admirable *Thèse de Doctorat* on Gogol, written by Mlle. Raïna Tyrnéva at the University of Lyon, and published at Aix in 1901. Among doctors' theses in general this shines out "like a star i' the darkest night."

W. L. P.

YALE COLLEGE, 16th March, 1908.

matters dramatic, and unconsciously prepared himself for his future career. Like Schiller, he wrote a tragedy, called *The Robbers*.

In December, 1828, Gogol took up his residence in St. Petersburg, bringing with him some manuscripts that he had written while at school. He had the temerity to publish one, which was so brutally ridiculed by the critics, that the young genius, in despair, burned all the unsold copies. Then he vainly tried various means of subsistence. Suddenly he decided to seek his fortune in America, but he was both homesick and seasick before the ship emerged from the Baltic, and from Lübeck he fled incontinently back to Petersburg. Then he tried to become an actor, but his voice was not sufficiently strong. For a short time he held a minor official position, and a little later was professor of history, an occupation he did not enjoy, saying after his resignation, "I am now a free Cossack again." Meanwhile his pen was steadily busy, and his sketches of farm life in the Ukraine attracted considerable attention among literary circles in the capital.

In 1831, he had the good fortune to make the acquaintance of the great poet Pushkin, father of modern Russian literature, and a few months later in the same year he was presented to Madame Smirnova; these friends gave him the entrée to the Petersburg salons, and the young writer found himself in a wholly congenial environment. It was Pushkin who suggested to him the subjects for two of his most famous works, *Revizór* and *Dead Souls*. Another friend, Joukovsky, exercised a powerful influence, and gave invaluable aid at several crises of his career. Joukovsky had translated the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*; his enthusiasm for Hellenic poetry was contagious; and under this inspira-

tion Gogol proceeded to write the most Homeric romance in Russian literature, *Taras Bulba* (1834). This story gave the first indubitable proof of its author's genius, and to-day in the world's fiction, it holds an unassailable place in the front rank. The book is so short that it may be read through in less than two hours; but it gives the same impression of vastness and immensity as the huge volumes of Sienkiewicz.

Gogol followed this amazingly powerful romance by two other works, which seem to have all the marks of immortality—the comedy *Revizór* (1836), and a long, unfinished novel, which its author called a poem, *Dead Souls* (1842). This latter book is the first of the great realistic novels of Russia, of which *Fathers and Sons*, *Crime and Punishment*, and *Anna Karenina* are such splendid examples.

From 1836 to his death in 1852, Gogol lived mainly abroad, and spent much time in travel. His favorite place of residence was Rome, to which city he repeatedly returned with increasing affection. In 1848 he made a pilgrimage to the Holy Land, for Gogol never departed from the pious Christian faith taught him by his mother; in fact, toward the end of his life, he became a mystic. The last years were marred by illness, and—a common thing among Russian literary geniuses—by intense nervous depression. He died at Moscow, the 21st February, 1852. His last words were the old saying, "And I shall laugh with a bitter laugh." These words were placed on his tomb.

II.

“REVIZÓR.”

Gogol is the founder of Russian realism. His single great predecessor in Russian literature, Pushkin, was a romantic, and like all other Europeans of his time, was influenced chiefly by Byron. But Gogol, after producing a historical romance, *Taras Bulba*, became a realist, the father of a race of giants, among whom Turgenev, Tolstoi, and Dostoievski seem the biggest to occidental eyes. Gogol's laughter is full of tears, and his bitterness mingled with mirth; for, unlike his mighty followers, who were men of the north, he was *homme du midi*, a child of Little Russia. Most Russian novels are steeped in pessimism, and their authors were men of sorrows. Gogol, however, has the double distinction of being the only great comic writer in the language, and in particular of being the author of the only Russian drama known all over the world, and still acted everywhere on the Continent. *Revizór* exhibits clearly the double nature of its author: his genius for moral satire, and his genius for pure fun. From the moral point of view, it is a terrible indictment against the most corrupt bureaucracy of modern times; from the comic point of view, it is an uproarious farce.

The origin of the play is as follows: While traveling in Russia one day, Pushkin stopped at Nijni-Novgorod. Here he was taken for a state functionary on tour among the provinces for purposes of government inspection. This amused the poet so keenly that he narrated all the circumstances to Gogol, and suggested that the latter make a play with this experience as the basis of the plot. Gogol

not only acted on the suggestion, but instead of a mere farce, he produced a comedy of manners. Toward the end of his life he wrote: "In *Revizór* I tried to gather in one heap all that was bad in Russia, as I then understood it: I wished to turn it all into ridicule. The real impression produced was that of fear. Through the laughter that I have never laughed more loudly, the spectator feels my bitterness and sorrow." The drama was finished on the 4th December, 1835, and of course the immediate difficulty was the censorship. How would it be possible for such a satire either to be printed or acted in Russia? Fortunately, the Czar, Nikolas I, was not only wise and tolerant, but a keen lover of the best in literature. Gogol's friend, Madame Smirnova, carried the manuscript to the monarch. It was read to him; he roared with laughter, and immediately ordered that it be acted. We may note also that he became a warm friend of Gogol, and frequently furnished him with money, taking care that the name of his benefactor should remain unknown.

The first performance was on the 19th April, 1856. The Czar attended in person, and applauded vigorously. Its success was immediate, and it has never quitted the stage. Gogol wrote to a friend, "On the opening night I felt uncomfortable from the very first as I sat in the theatre. Anxiety for the approval of the audience did not trouble me. There was only *one* critic in the house—myself—that I feared. I heard clamorous objections within me which drowned all else. However, the public, as a whole, was satisfied. Half of the audience praised the play, the other half condemned it, but not on artistic grounds."

Revizór is one of the best constructed comedies in any language: for not only has it a unified and well-ordered

plot, but it does not stop with the final fall of the curtain. In the last dumb scene, after all the mirth, the real trouble is about to begin; and the spectators leave the theatre, not merely with the delightful memory of an evening's entertainment, but with their imagination aflame. The comedy resembles real life, in that it has no artificial stop. Furthermore, *Revizór* has that combination of the intensely local element with the universal, so characteristic of works of genius. Its avowed attempt was to satirize local and temporal abuses; but it is impossible to imagine any state of society in the near future where the play will not seem real. To-day audiences in Germany enjoy it more than almost any other foreign comedy.

W.M. LYON PHELPS.

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(A very few books by and on Gogol, and one or two works on Russian literature, are mentioned here, both to satisfy possible curiosity, and to stimulate it.)

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*I am indebted to Mr. Andrew Keogh, of the Yale Library, for this reference.

THE YALE UNIVERSITY DRAMATIC ASSOCIATION.

(Founded February 28th, 1900, by Henry D. Wescott.)

OFFICERS.

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THOMAS ACHELIS, 1908.

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SIDNEY ROLLINS OVERALL, 1908

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RONALD MUIRHEAD BYRNES.

1908 S.

JOHN PATTERSON RAMSEY.

PHILIP STANLEY WAINWRIGHT.

* Has left College.

1909.

FRANCIS PEABODY BUTLER.
MILES CARRINGTON HANNAH.
STANLEY WESTCOTT HOLMES.
MAXWELL OSWALD PARRY.
REGINALD CARMAN MACKNIGHT PEIRCE.
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CHARLES PASCAL FRANCHOT.
THOMAS LAWRAZON RIGGS.
HARVEY TRACY WARREN.

1910 S.

MATTHEW GRISWOLD ELY.

1911.

ARTHUR MOWRY HARTWELL.
JOHN VINCENT MC DONNELL.
EDGAR MONTILLION WOOLLEY.





FRANK LEA SHORT,
Stage Director.

THE YALE UNIVERSITY DRAMATIC ASSOCIATION

Presents as its

NINTH ANNUAL SPRING PRODUCTION

“REVIZÓR”

BY NIKOLAS V. GOGOL

For the first time in America, under the stage direction of

MR. FRANK LEA SHORT.

NEW YORK--Waldorf-Astoria Hotel, Easter Monday, April 20th,
1908, Matinee and Evening.

HARTFORD--Parsons' Theatre, Tuesday Evening, April 21st.

WATERBURY--Poli's Theatre, Wednesday, April 22d, Matinee
and Evening.

NEW HAVEN--Hyperion Theatre, Friday and Saturday Evenings,
April 24th and 25th.

FORMER PRODUCTIONS.

May 23d, 1900.

"The Pardoner's Tale" of Chaucer and "The Second Shepherd's Play."

April 23d and 24th, 1901.

Thomas Heywood's "The Fair Maid of the West."

October 22d, 1901.

Bicentennial Campus Celebration—Under Auspices of the Yale Dramatic Association.

April 23d and 24th, 1902.

Sheridan's "The Critic" and Townley's "High Life Below Stairs."

April 27th and 28th, 1903.

Oliver Goldsmith's "The Good-Natured Man."

April 19th and 20th, 1904.

Tom Taylor's "New Men and Old Acres."

April 4th and 5th, and Carnegie Lyceum, New York,

April 7th, 1905.

A. W. Pinero's "The Magistrate."

April 3d and 4th, 1906.

Shakespeare's "Henry IV, Part I."

First Promenade Performance, January 19th, 1907.

A. W. Pinero's "The Amazons."

April 1st, Parsons' Theatre, Hartford, Conn.; April 2d and 3d, Waldorf-Astoria Hotel, New York, and April 5th and 6th, 1907, Hyperion Theatre, New Haven.

Henrik Ibsen's "The Pretenders."

November 18th, 1907, College Street Hall.

"El Doctor y El Enfermo," "Einer Muss Heiraten," and "Le Prétexte."

Second Promenade Performance, January 18th, 1908.

Oscar Wilde's "The Importance of Being Earnest."

CAST OF CHARACTERS.

ANTON ANTONOVICH SKVOZNIK-DMUKHANOVSKI,¹ Police
Prefect, *Maxwell Oswald Parry, 1909.*

ANNA ANDREEVNA, his wife,
Matthew Griswold Ely, 1910 S.

MARYA ANTONOVNA, his daughter,
Arthur Mowry Hartwell, 1911.

- LUKA LUKICH KHLOPOV, Supervisor of schools,
Reginald Carman MacKnight Peirce, 1909.

THE SUPERVISOR'S WIFE, *Stanley Westcott Holmes, 1909.*

AMMOS FEDROVICH LYAPKIN-TYAPKIN, Judge,
Charles Roberts Hopkins, 1907.

ARTEMI FILIPOVICH ZEMLYANIKA, Guardian of the Char-
itable Institutions, *Ronald Muirhead Byrnes, 1908.*

IVAN KUZMICH SHPEKIN, Postmaster.
Edgar Montillion Woolley, 1911.

PETR IVANOVICH DOBCHINSKI, Country Squire.
Thomas Lawrason Riggs, 1910.

PETR IVANOVICH BOBCHINSKI, Country Squire,
Harvey Tracy Warren, 1910.

IVAN ALEKSONDROVICH KHLESTAKOV, a ne'er do well,
Thomas Achelis, 1908.

CHRISTIAN IVANOVICH GIBNER, a district doctor,
Sidney Rollins Overall, 1908.

FEDOR ANDREEVICH LULUKOV,
William DeForest Manice, 1911.

IVAN LAZAREVICH RASTAKOVSKI,
Hubert McDonnell, 1909.

STEPAN IVANOVICH KOROBKIN,
Donald Wallace Porter, 1909.
(Retired functionaries, respected people in the city.) ..

STEPAN ILICH KHOVERTOV, Police Captain,
Edward Otis Proctor, 1909.

SVISTUNOV, Sergeant of Police,
Loomis Havemeyer, 1910 S.

DERZHIMORDA, Sergeant of Police, *Herbert Scott Snead.*

OSIP, Khlestakov's Valet,
Miles Carrington Hannah, 1909.

MISHKA, the Prefect's Valet,
John Vincent McDonnell, 1911.

THE WAITER of the Hotel,
Lindell Theodore Bates, 1910 S.

ABDULIN, a Merchant, *Walter Morgan Crunden, 1908.*

FEVRONYA PETROVNA POSHLEPKINA, a Locksmith's wife,
John Vincent McDonnell, 1911.

THE MILITARY SERGEANT'S WIDOW,
Henry Theodore Fleitmann, 1909.

Guests of both sexes.

Tradesmen.

Citizens.

Petitioners.

The music is by the Yale Orchestra, under the direction
of George Ira Tompkins, 1908, of the Yale Music School.

Property Managers—Loomis Havemeyer, 1910 S.; Lindell Theodore Bates, 1910 S.

Understudies—Henry Theodore Fleitmann, 1909; William DeForest Manice, 1911.

Costume Committee—Sidney Rollins Overall, 1908; Donald Wallace Porter, 1908.

THE SCENES.

ACT I.

A room in the house of the police prefect.

ACT II.

A small, dark bedroom in the inn.

ACT III.

The same as Act I.

ACT IV.

The same as Act I.

ACT V.

The same as Act I.

The action passes in the first half of the Nineteenth Century.

REVIZÓR.

A COMEDY IN FIVE ACTS.

ACT FIRST.

SCENE—*A room in the house of the police prefect. On the right, near the front, a what-not with a few books, writing paper, ink, and pen; in about the middle of the wall, a double door leading to the hallway and the street; a couple of old pictures on this wall; a tall rubber plant in a wooden pail in the right hand corner, back of a chair; in the background, two windows curtained and tied with a ribbon to each side of the window casing; between the windows, a sofa; over the sofa, a small picture of Nicholas I; in the left corner, an icon; in the left wall, two single doors, an oblong mirror, a chair under it; in the middle of the room, a good sized table; over the table, suspended from the ceiling, an oil lamp with a large white shade, from which crystals hang down; chairs everywhere. The furniture is old-fashioned and well worn.*

TIME—*Middle of forenoon.*

ANTON ANTONOVICH, ARTEMI FILIPPOVICH, LUKICH, AMMOS FEDROVICH, STEPAN ILICHI, CHRISTIAN IVANOVICH, and two sergeants are in the room as the curtain goes up.

ANTON ANTONOVICH. I have invited you, gentlemen, to tell you a very disagreeable piece of news. A revizór is coming to inspect us.

AMMOS FEDROVICH. A revizór? What do you mean by that?

ARTEMI FILIPPOVICH. Yes, what do you mean? A revizór?

ANTON ANTONOVICH. An inspector from St. Petersburg. . . incognito . . . And what is still worse, with secret orders!

AMMOS FEDROVICH. So that's what it has come to!

ARTEMI FILIPPOVICH. We were all right—and now they're going to make it hot for us.

LUKA LUKICH. Great heavens! Secret orders!

ANTON ANTONOVICH. For some time I've had a pre-sentiment that trouble was coming. This is a letter that I received from Andrei Ivanovich Chmikhov,—Artemi Filippovich, you know him, don't you?—here's what he says: "My dear friend, godfather, and benefactor . . . [He murmurs something while looking in the paper] and to apprise you"—O, here it is! "Among other things I hasten to let you know that a functionary with secret orders is coming to inspect all the governmental conditions of the town, introducing himself as a private person. I have this on the best authority. And as I know that, like the rest of us, you have your faults—you are all right and nothing slips through your fingers in the way of bribes." . . . H'm! That's a manner of speaking. . . . [He raises his fore-finger very high.] Well, all of us are in the same boat—it's all in the family—"So I advise you to take all possible precautions, because he is apt to drop in on you at any time, if he is not already in town, somewhere incognito.

Yesterday I . . ." Then come family matters . . . "Sister Anna Krilovna is visiting us with her husband. Ivan Krilich has grown very fat and insists upon playing the fiddle . . ." Such are the circumstances.

[*Puts letter in envelope.*

AMMOS FEDROVICH. Yes, unusual circumstances, most unusual. He's not coming just for the fun of it!

LUKA LUKICH. Why, Anton Antonovich, why all this? Why this revizór?

ANTON ANTONOVICH. Why? Just our luck. [Sighs.] Before, they examined other cities, thank God; now, it is our turn.

AMMOS FEDROVICH. I think, Anton Antonovich, that there must be a hidden political purpose in it. I venture to say that it means this. Russia, yes, Russia, wants to start a war, and the Ministry, yes, the Ministry, sends a functionary to see if there's any treason here.

ANTON ANTONOVICH. Pooh, what an absurd idea! You're a bright one! Treason in a small town like this? It's not on the border line.

AMMOS FEDROVICH. No, you're wrong there, Anton Antonovich! The officials are sly fellows. They're not taking any chances! Even if we are far away, they're not going to leave any stone unturned.

ANTON ANTONOVICH. Have it any way you want to! He's coming anyhow! I have warned you, gentlemen, look out! In my own department I have made certain arrangements. I advise you likewise to take the necessary precautions — especially you, Artemi Filippovich — without doubt the visiting official will wish first of all to inspect the charitable institutions under your jurisdiction. So fix things to look respectable. Put clean nightcaps on the patients, and while you're about it, wash them.

ARTEMI FILIPPOVICH. Oh, they're all right, but I can change the caps if you think it really necessary.

ANTON ANTONOVICH. You'd better. And over each bed have a Latin text or a motto—"In God we trust"—but you know what's suitable. Christian Ivanovich, work up your charts, when the patient was taken sick, the day and month. Don't let them smoke such rank tobacco. The Inspector may object. It's strong enough to make one sneeze. And don't have so many patients in the hospital—it makes the doctor look overworked or incapable. And as for you, Ammos Fedrovich, you'd better turn your attention to the court house. The witness room looks like a barnyard. Really it's not quite fitting for you to keep your geese there.

AMMOS FEDROVICH. Well, if you think so, I'll have them taken to the prisoner's kitchen at once.

ANTON ANTONOVICH. And as for the town politics and what Andrei Ivanovich says in his letter—"you have your faults" . . . I simply don't know what he means. Of course everyone has committed some indiscretion.

AMMOS FEDROVICH. But what do you call indiscretions? There are indiscretions and indiscretions. For myself, I tell everybody openly that I take bribes. Yes, but what bribes? Greyhound pups!

ANTON ANTONOVICH. Pups are pups, and a bribe is a bribe!

AMMOS FEDROVICH. Not at all, Anton Antonovich. Suppose, for example, that a man's fur coat costs five hundred rubles, and his wife's flannel petticoat costs . . .

ANTON ANTONOVICH. Well, what has that to do with it, if you are bribed with greyhound pups? Sh— [He stops fight.] And you, Luka Lukich, as school supervisor, watch the teachers! Of course I realize that they have a great

deal of book learning, but—while I don't want to complain—don't you think that they are too temperamental? Your teacher of history, for instance—brilliant mind and fine scholar, but certainly too energetic. I heard him once! Things were safe with Assyrians and Babylonians, but when he got to Alexander the Great . . . As I am a man and a sinner, I didn't know what had happened. He rushed down from the platform, seized a chair, and smashed it. I'll admit that Alexander was a hero, but why smash chairs? X
The Czar loses by it.

LUKA LUKICH. I know, I know. I have *mentioned* it to him. But *what can you do?* He's ready to die for science.

ANTON ANTONOVICH. A noble soul! but the children's lives . . . Ah, well, but details wouldn't matter much if it weren't for that cursed spy incognito. If he should pounce suddenly down upon me and say, "Who's the Judge, Lyapkin Tyapkin? Let's have Lyapkin! And who's the guardian of the charitable institutions, Zemlyaniko? Bring in Zemlyaniko!" And *then* where would we be?

[IVAN KUZMICH enters from the door on the right.

IVAN KUZMICH. [Somewhat excited.] Gentlemen, say! What about this official that's coming?

ANTON ANTONOVICH. Don't you know?

IVAN KUZMICH. Petr Ivanovich Bobchinski was just now in my office.

ANTON ANTONOVICH. Well, what do you think?

IVAN KUZMICH. Think? It's war with Turkey.

AMMOS FEDROVICH. Just what I said.

ANTON ANTONOVICH. Idiots!

IVAN KUZMICH. War with Turkey, sure as I live! It's all the Frenchmen's dirty work.

ANTON ANTONOVICH. War with Turkey, preposterous! War with Turkey! If we went to war with Turkey, it's not the Turks that would get the worst of it! I have it on the most reliable authority!

IVAN KUZMICH. If that's so, there'll be no war with Turkey!

ANTON ANTONOVICH. Well, anyhow, the revizór is coming. How's your department, Ivan Kuzmich?

IVAN KUZMICH. Mine? Same as yours, Anton Antonovich.

[*A shot.*

ANTON ANTONOVICH. Same as mine? Why I, I have nothing to fear, although of course I cannot help feeling a little uneasy. People are so malicious. The merchants and citizens worry me a bit. They say I am hard on them. But as I am a man and a sinner, if I ever took anything from anyone, I meant it for the best. [*Takes him by the arm and leads him aside.*] All the same, I think, I think that there must have been some malicious complaints. Otherwise why should the government send a revizór here? Now see here, Ivan Kuzmich, don't you think for our mutual protection that you could manage just to peep into every letter that goes through your office? You can easily seal them up again, or for that matter you can deliver them unsealed.

IVAN KUZMICH. Oh, that's all right! You don't need to teach me! I've always done it, not as a precaution, but by way of *friendly interest* in the *community*. I could just *die reading letters*. I just love to know what's going on in the world. There's so many things in them—and so edifying—much better than the *Moscow Gazette*.

ANTON ANTONOVICH. Well, then, have you seen anything in them about an official from St. Petersburg?



MAXWELL OSWALD PARRY, 1909,
as Anton Antonovich.

1978
1979
1980
1981
1982
1983
1984

IVAN KUZMICH. No, not a word.

ANTON ANTONOVICH. Well, if by any chance you should find any complaint or denunciation against *me*—just suppress that letter.

IVAN KUZMICH. I understand.

AMMOS FEDROVICH. Go easy or you'll get into trouble!

IVAN KUZMICH. Oh, goodness gracious me!

ANTON ANTONOVICH. Not at all, not at all! Of course, if it came to be known publicly, it would be another matter; but this is all in the family.

AMMOS FEDROVICH. Yes, it's all in the family. And while I'm about it, I came here for the express purpose of presenting you with a pup. A cousin of my pup! You've heard about that law suit? Cheptovich and Varkhovinski. But it really does not affect me. You see, I hunt hares first on the estate of one and then of the other.

ANTON ANTONOVICH. Good Lord, what do I care about your hunts? All I can think about now is that cursed incognito. I expect that door to open any moment and suddenly . . .

[BOBCHINSKI and DOBCHINSKI both enter from the street door and out of breath.

PETR IVANOVICH BOBCHINSKI. What an extraordinary occurrence!

PETR IVANOVICH DOBCHINSKI. What an unexpected event!

EVERYBODY. What is it?

PETR IVANOVICH DOBCHINSKI. A most unforeseen affair. We came to the inn . . .

PETR IVANOVICH BOBCHINSKI. [Interrupting.] Petr Ivanovich and I came to the inn . . .

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PETR IVANOVICH DOBCHINSKI. [Interrupting.] No, no, no, Petr Ivanovich, I'll tell it.

PETR IVANOVICH BOBCHINSKI. No, no, let me—you won't get it straight.

PETR IVANOVICH DOBCHINSKI. You'll forget half of it.

PETR IVANOVICH BOBCHINSKI. Of course I won't. Please let me start it. Please, gentlemen, don't let Petr Ivanovich stop me.

ANTON ANTONOVICH. For heaven's sake, one of you speak. What is it? My heart is in my mouth. Be seated, gentlemen, be seated. Petr Ivanovich, here is a chair for you. [All sit around the two PETR IVANOVICHES.] Now, then, what is it?

PETR IVANOVICH BOBCHINSKI. Let me, let me! I'll tell it all in order. As soon as I had the pleasure of leaving you, right after you had permitted yourselves to be disturbed by the letter you had received, I ran at once—please don't stop me, Petr Ivanovich—I know what you would say. So I, as you will please see, ran to Korobkin, but not finding him at home I turned to Rastakabski, and not finding him at home, I went to Ivan Kuzmich to inform him of the news you had received, and as I was coming from there I met Petr Ivanovich . . .

PETR IVANOVICH DOBCHINSKI. [Interrupting.] By the stand, where they sell tartlets . . .

PETR IVANOVICH BOBCHINSKI. By the tartlet stand. Yes! Having met Petr Ivanovich I asked him, "Have you heard the news Antonovich has received through a trustworthy letter?" But Petr Ivanovich had already heard it from your housekeeper, Avdotya, who had been sent to Filip Antonovich Puchechuev after something . . . and I did not know what it was . . .

PETR IVANOVICH DOBCHINSKI. [Interrupting.] A keg of French brandy.

PETR IVANOVICH BOCHINSKI. [Warding off his hand.] Yes, yes, a keg of French brandy. And so Petr Ivanovich and myself went to Puchechuev . . . Now, Petr Ivanovich, do not interrupt me! . . . We went to Puchechuev, and on the way Petr Ivanovich said to me, "Let us go," said he, "to the inn. My stomach is empty. I haven't eaten anything since morning. Why, my stomach is just wobbly. They have just received fresh salmon, so we'll have a lunch." But no sooner had we entered the inn, than a young man . . .

PETR IVANOVICH DOBCHINSKI. Of good appearance, in citizen's clothes . . .

PETR IVANOVICH BOCHINSKI. Yes, yes, of good appearance—in citizen's clothes. He was walking up and down the room and with such a look of deliberation on his face—physiognomy—manner—and here, [Turning his hand near his forehead.] very, very, very thoughtful. I had a kind of presentiment and said to Petr Ivanovich, "There is something out of the way here!" Yes, and Petr Ivanovich immediately crooked his finger and summoned the innkeeper, Vlas,—his wife gave birth to a child three weeks ago, and such a bouncing boy; he'll be like his father, an innkeeper—having called up Vlas, Petr Ivanovich asked him quietly, "Who is this young man?" And Vlas answered, "This," says he—oh, do not interrupt, Petr Ivanovich, if you please, do not interrupt me; you would not be able to tell the story any better, so help me, you would not. You lisp—you whistle when you talk. "This young man," says he, "is an official." Yes, "he has come from St. Petersburg," says he, "and his name," says he, "is Ivan

Aleksandrovich Khlestakov, and he is on his way," says he, "to the government of Saratov, and," says he, "he is introducing himself in the strangest way. He has been living here for nearly two weeks. He has not left the place once. He charges everything and won't pay a kopeck." When he told me this, it dawned upon me here above. [Points to his head.] "Oho," said I to Petr Ivanovich . . .

PETR IVANOVICH DOBCHINSKI. No, Petr Ivanovich, it was I who said, "Oho!"

PETR IVANOVICH BOBCHINSKI. You said it first, and then I said it. "Oho," said I and Petr Ivanovich. "And for what reason is he staying here when he is on his way to Saratov?" . . . Yes, he is *the official*.

ANTON ANTONOVICH. Who? What official?

PETR IVANOVICH BOBCHINSKI. The government inspector referred to in your letter—the revisór.

ANTON ANTONOVICH. [Terrified.] As I am a man and a sinner! Don't say that! He's not the revisór!

PETR IVANOVICH DOBCHINSKI. He—he don't pay his bills and don't leave. Who else could it be? His postchaise is ordered for Saratov.

PETR IVANOVICH BOBCHINSKI. He's the one all right! You should have seen him. The way he pried into everything. When he saw that I and Petr Ivanovich were eating salmon—salmon for Petr Ivanovich's stomach—yes he even came up behind us and peeked into our plates—I shook in my shoes.

ANTON ANTONOVICH. Oh Lord, have mercy upon us, sinners! What room has he there?

PETR IVANOVICH DOBCHINSKI. Room number 5, at the head of the staircase.

PETR IVANOVICH BOBCHINSKI. The very room where those officers had that fight!

ANTON ANTONOVICH. And has he been here long?

PETR IVANOVICH DOBCHINSKI. About two weeks. He arrived on the day of St. Basil of Egypt.

[ANTON ANTONOVICH *betrays great agitation, clutching his head and tearing his hair.*

ARTEMI FILIPPOVICH. Well, Anton Antonovich, don't you think that we had better don our uniforms and pay a formal call on him at the inn?

AMMOS FEDROVICH. No, no! First send the Mayor, the clergy, and a delegation of the merchants.

ANTON ANTONOVICH. [Looks down a bit.] No, no, let me do this. I have been in a worse fix than this in my life before and gotten out, and the joke was on the other fellow. May God help me now! [Turning to PETR IVANOVICH BOCHINSKI.] You say that he's a young man?

PETR IVANOVICH BOCHINSKI. Yes, a young man of twenty-three or twenty-four—not much over.

ANTON ANTONOVICH. So much the better. A young fellow is easy. It's the old fool that's hard to deal with. You gentlemen, you had better look after your affairs. I'll see about him. I'll go myself, or perhaps with Petr Ivanovich, down to the inn, casually, as though for a walk, in my official capacity to investigate the welfare of the travelers. Hei, Svistunov!

ARTEMI FILIPPOVICH. Let's go, Ammos Fedrovich. It's better for us to be somewhere else.

AMMOS FEDROVICH. What have you to be afraid of? Put clean nightcaps on and you are all right.

ARTEMI FILIPPOVICH. Nightcaps! The patients are supposed to have gruel, and all over the hospital there's

a smell of cabbage strong enough to knock you down.
Nightcaps!

[AMMOS FEDROVICH, ARTEMI FILIPPOVICH, LUKA
LUKICH, and IVAN KUZMICH go out through the
street door, and in the doorway bump against the
returning sergeant.

ANTON ANTONOVICH. Is my droshki at the door?
SVISTUNOV. Yes, sir!

ANTON ANTONOVICH. Go on duty. Or no, wait! Go
and fetch—where are the others? Are you all alone here?
I will order Prokhorob to be here. Where is Prokhorob?
Where is the Chief of Police?

SVISTUNOV. In the station house, but unfit for duty.

ANTON ANTONOVICH. What do you mean?

SVISTUNOV. Brought in this morning—more dead than
alive—two buckets of water—not sobered up yet.

ANTON ANTONOVICH. [Clutching his head.] My God!
On duty! No, run into my room, do you hear, and get
my sword and hat. Well, Petr Ivanovich, let's go.

PETR IVANOVICH BOECHINSKI. I'd like to peep through
the keyhole to see what he'll do.

[SVISTUNOV returns with hat, box, and sword, and
puts both on table—the hat back of the box.

ANTON ANTONOVICH. [Taking the sword to the ser-
geant.] Run at once. Get policemen, let each take one—
take—damn! how my sword is—let every man (the devil
take them) take a broom and sweep a street—especially
sweep the street in front of the inn clean. Do you hear?
And listen, you! I know you! You're too popular! You're

stealing right and left. Look out. You're taking more than a petty officer's share! Go! [He goes out through the street door. Enter STEPAN ILICH.] Now, listen, Stepan Illich, the revizór from St. Petersburg has come. What have you done?

STEPAN ILICH. Just as you ordered. I have sent Sergeant Pugovichyn with the whole force to clean up the sidewalks.

ANTON ANTONOVICH. Where did you send Derzhimorda?

STEPAN ILICH. To the fire department.

ANTON ANTONOVICH. Is Prokhorov drunk?

STEPAN ILICH. Drunk!

ANTON ANTONOVICH. Why did you permit it?

STEPAN ILICH. God knows. There was a fight on the outskirts of the town yesterday. He went there to restore order, and he came back drunk.

ANTON ANTONOVICH. Listen! Order Sergeant Pugovichyn—he is a big man—to stand on duty on the bridge for the sake of appearances. Oh, good heavens, I forgot! There are about forty carts of rubbish by that bridge. What a filthy town this is! They will dump all their rubbish there. [Sighs.] And if the revizór should ask them if they are satisfied with the government service, they must answer, "Satisfied with everything, your honor." And if there is anybody that isn't satisfied, I will make it mighty hot for him afterwards. Oh Lord, have mercy upon us, miserable offenders! If I can only carry this off, I will put such a candle on the altar as has never been seen before. I'll make every one of those rascally merchants give up three pounds of wax for it. Oh Lord, oh Lord! Now let us go, Petr Ivanovich. [He takes the box in place of his hat.]

ACT SECOND.

SCENE—*A small, dark room in the inn. On the left, on the floor near the front, a couple of white, round, empty bottles, a pair of boots and leather overshoes, a red blouse or two; from the left corner, extending into the background and a little off the floor, a semicircular staircase rises into the ceiling; close to the staircase, along side of the background, a large chemodan, a large leather bag with a box-like shape bottom. Osip's coat and cap on it; over the chemodan, a few plain iron nails; in about the middle of the background, a small door, poorly fastened; in the right wall, a small window, a table under it, and a chair nearby; another chair; upon the table, a clothes brush, matches, ashes, two black earthenware pots, one small and one large; a tumbler in a saucer, a small, deep saucer, extra; a brass candlestick, green with wear; a narrow, wooden bed, near the front on the right, with head close to the wall, a square pillow, and the necessary bedclothes on it.*

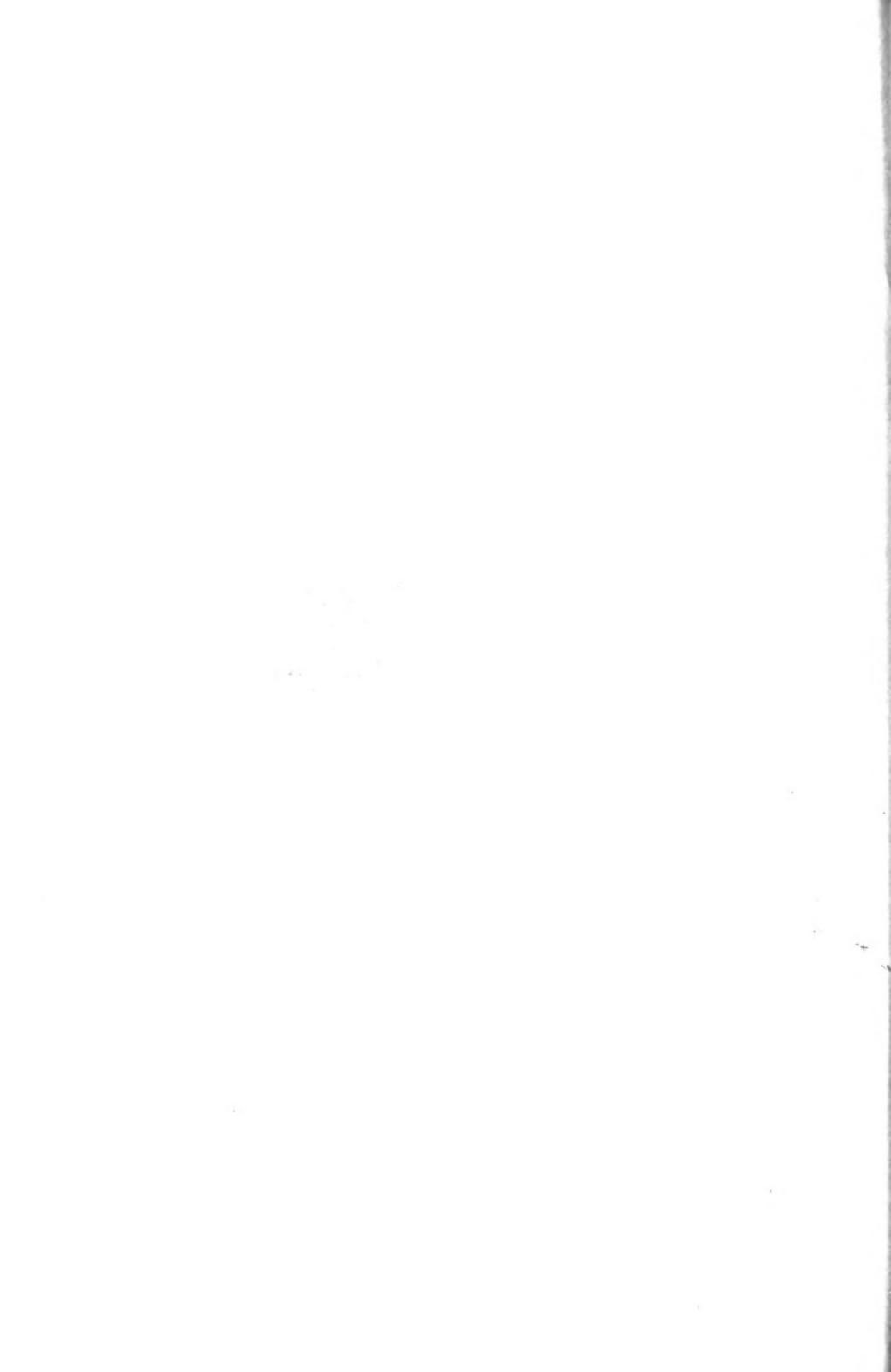
TIME—*Early in the afternoon. The room is dark.*

DISCOVERED—*Osip is lying on his master's bed, as the curtain goes up.*

OSIP. To the devil with it! I'm so hungry! My stomach! We'll never get home—second month since St. Petersburg. Ivan Aleksandrovich—what a fool! Gambled away his money, and now just sits and waits. Why don't he stay in his postchaise? But, no, he must show his face in every town. [Mocks him.] “Ei, Osip, get me a better room,



ARTHUR MOWRY HARTWELL, 1911,
as Maria Antonovna.



and order a good dinner. I can't stand poor cooking. I must have things decently served." I wouldn't mind so much if he was only somebody; but he's nobody—only a spendthrift—makes friends with travelers, plays cards with 'em—and then the fool loses. Some days we stuff, some days we starve—we're starving now. And it's all his fault. What can I do? His old man sends him money—he rides, goes to the theatre, and in less than a week I have to sell his new suit to the old clothes man. Oh, I'm so tired of such a life. Why the deuce don't he brace up? If his old man only knew how he was wasting his time at cards he would give him such a licking that he'd remember it. Now, the innkeeper said he wouldn't give him anything to eat till he pays. Oh, if I could only have some cabbage soup!

[*He hurriedly gets up from the bed.*

IVAN ALEKSONDROVICH. Here, take it. [*He hands him the cap and cane.*] Scoundrel, you've been on my bed again.

OSIP. I haven't been on your bed.

IVAN ALEKSONDROVICH. You lie. You slept on it. Is there any tobacco there?

OSIP. Of course not. You smoked the last of it four days ago.

IVAN ALEKSONDROVICH. [*Putting the things away.*] Look here, Osip.

OSIP. Sir?

IVAN ALEKSONDROVICH. [*Walking up and down the room.*] You go down . . .

OSIP. Where?

IVAN ALEKSONDROVICH. [*Walking around and warily twisting his lips; then speaking in a loud and resolute voice.*]

Down stairs to the buffet. Tell them they should send me up dinner.

OSIP. I won't go.

IVAN ALEKSONDROVICH. [In a loud, but not as resolute a voice.] How dare you, you blockhead!

OSIP. All right, all right. Anyway, if I should go, it's no use. The innkeeper said he wouldn't send up any more dinners.

IVAN ALEKSONDROVICH. He wouldn't dare not to. What a bluff!

OSIP. He even said that he would complain to the police. You haven't paid your bill for over three weeks. "You and your master are dead beats"—these are his very words—"You and your master are dead beats, and I've seen that kind before."

IVAN ALEKSONDROVICH. You needn't repeat it, fool.

OSIP. And, what's more, he said he wasn't going to stand it any longer. "I'll report him to the police"—these are his very words—"and I'll have him arrested; and I'll have him locked up in jail."

IVAN ALEKSONDROVICH. That will do for you. You go and tell him . . .

OSIP. Call him up here. You can talk to him.

IVAN ALEKSONDROVICH. I? I don't want to see him. You go and tell him . . .

OSIP. But surely, sir . . .

IVAN ALEKSONDROVICH. Well, go call the landlord. [OSIP goes out.] Beastly hungry! Took a short walk—hoped to lose my appetite. Didn't! What's the use of an appetite—with no credit?

OSIP and the WAITER enter.



THOMAS ACHELIS, 1908,
as Ivan Aleksandrovich.



IVAN ALEKSONDROVICH. Ah! Here's the waiter? And how are things coming to-day? Well?

WAITER. Yes, sir, thank you, sir.

IVAN ALEKSONDROVICH. And everything all right in the hotel?

WAITER. Yes, sir, thank you, sir.

IVAN ALEKSONDROVICH. Hotel full?

WAITER. Yes, sir, thank you, sir.

IVAN ALEKSONDROVICH. By the way, there seems to be some delay about my dinner. Would you mind asking them to hurry it up a bit? You see, I have an engagement right after dinner.

WAITER. But the boss, he said you couldn't have no dinner; he'd a strong mind to get the police.

IVAN ALEKSONDROVICH. But what good would that do? Just stop and think. I must eat, mustn't I? If I don't eat, I die. He wouldn't like that! And I'm very hungry now.

WAITER. Well, the boss, he said, "He don't get no more dinners until I see his money." That's what the boss said.

IVAN ALEKSONDROVICH. But, you reason with him. Use a little tact. Tact!

WAITER. Use what, sir?

IVAN ALEKSONDROVICH. Tact. Tell him that I simply must eat. Money is a secondary consideration. Maybe he can go without eating. I cannot! Tell him that.

WAITER. Just as you say, sir! Just as you say. [Exit.

IVAN ALEKSONDROVICH. Lord, what a hole if the dinner doesn't come! What shall I do? Sell my clothes? Damned if I will! I must have decent clothes. A fellow can't travel on his face. I wish Yokhim had let me have his carriage. Great thing to go home in a gay turnout—with lanterns, and Osip in livery. Oh, I'm so hungry!

OSIP enters and then WAITER.

IVAN ALEKSONDROVICH. Well?

OSIP. It's coming!

IVAN ALEKSONDROVICH. Dinner! dinner! dinner!

WAITER. [With plates and napkins on a Japanese tray.] The boss, he says this is the last time.

IVAN ALEKSONDROVICH. Oh, that landlord! I'm tired of him! He makes too much fuss!

WAITER. Soup and roast.

IVAN ALEKSONDROVICH. Only two courses?

WAITER. That's all the boss sent.

IVAN ALEKSONDROVICH. How absurd! I can't understand it at all. Ask him what he means by such nonsense. This isn't enough!

WAITER. Well, the boss, he said it's too much!

IVAN ALEKSONDROVICH. But the salad and the dessert?

WAITER. Ain't no salad nor dessert!

IVAN ALEKSONDROVICH. What nonsense! I saw plenty in the dining room.

WAITER. Well, you see sir, it's this way: there is plenty, and then again there ain't.

IVAN ALEKSONDROVICH. What do you mean?

WAITER. In your case, there ain't!

IVAN ALEKSONDROVICH. Where's the fish and entrée?

WAITER. You don't get no fish and entry.

IVAN ALEKSONDROVICH. Stupid!

WAITER. Yes, sir.

IVAN ALEKSONDROVICH. Other people have the table d'hôte. Why not I?

WAITER. They pay.

IVAN ALEKSONDROVICH. Perfectly disgusting soup!

[He tastes it.

WAITER. Chicken soup, sir.

IVAN ALEKSONDROVICH. Chicken soup! That soup never saw a chicken! Bring me an order of . . .

WAITER. The boss, he said, if you didn't like it you didn't have to eat it. [Wants to take the soup back.]

IVAN ALEKSONDROVICH. [Holding on to soup.] Wait a minute, wait a minute. [Tastes it again.] This is too disgusting. Here Osip, you can have it. Give me the roast. [He tries to cut it.] This isn't a roast!

WAITER. What is it, then?

IVAN ALEKSONDROVICH. Heaven only knows, but it isn't a roast. Nothing else?

WAITER. No.

IVAN ALEKSONDROVICH. Idiots! Nothing fit to eat. The way they rob a fellow. Hungry as ever. [OSIP goes out.] Nothing to eat! No credit! No money!

OSIP enters.

OSIP. The police prefect is downstairs. He wants to see you.

IVAN ALEKSONDROVICH. The police! It's all up! The rascal was in a devilish hurry with his complaint! I simply will not go to jail! What does he take me for? A tramp? [He musters up courage and straightens out.] Whatever happens, I'll look him straight in the eye, and I'll say, "How dare you, how . . ."

[The door knob is heard turning; he grows pale and shrivels up a little.

Enter ANTON ANTONOVICH and PETR IVANOVICH DOBCHINSKI, who is nearly all the time behind the Police

Prefect. ANTON ANTONOVICH, having entered, remains still. Both, frightened, look a few minutes at each other with bulging eyes.

ANTON ANTONOVICH. [Having come to himself a little, he assumes the posture of attention.] Good afternoon, sir.

[Osip gets out of the way, quietly.

IVAN ALEKSONDROVICH. [Bowing.] My compliments.

ANTON ANTONOVICH. I beg your pardon . . .

IVAN ALEKSONDROVICH. Quite unnecessary, sir.

ANTON ANTONOVICH. As police prefect, it is my duty to look after the welfare of the guests of this . . .

IVAN ALEKSONDROVICH. [Stammering a little at first, but at the end of his remark, speaking loud and clear.] I'll pay all right. I can't help it! It isn't my fault anyhow. [PETR IVANOVICH BOCHINSKI looks in through the opening of the door.] It's all the landlord's fault! He gives me the worst meat you ever saw, and the soup—the devil only knows what's in that soup. I had to throw it out. He's been starving me for days. I'm not to blame! It's too absurd!

ANTON ANTONOVICH. [Timidly.] I beg your pardon. I surely am not to blame. I always see that there is good meat in the market. The Kholmogorski cattle dealers usually bring good meat. They are honorable and well-behaved people. I really do not see where the landlord gets poor meat! If you are not comfortable here, I'll take you . . .

IVAN ALEKSONDROVICH. No, no, I don't want you to! I know what that means! What right have you to take me to jail? How dare you? I . . . I am in the official

service in St. Petersburg. [He grows more courageous.]
I . . . I . . . I . . .

ANTON ANTONOVICH. [Aside.] We're undone.

IVAN ALEKSONDROVICH. You and yours can do what you please . . . I'll not go! What do you mean by this insolence? What do you mean by it! I'll report you to the ministry.

ANTON ANTONOVICH. [Aside.] Have mercy upon me! Don't ruin me. Remember my wife and children. Don't ruin me, for God's sake!

IVAN ALEKSONDROVICH. What has that to do with me? Because you have a wife and children must I go to jail? It's too absurd. [PETR IVANOVICH BOCHINSKI looks in through the door opening, and being frightened, hides himself.] No, thanking you very much, I must regret!

ANTON ANTONOVICH. It's not my fault, it's not my fault. A prefect's salary—what can you do with that? If I did take bribes, what were they? Nothing!—stuff for the table, cloth for a uniform. As for that sergeant's widow, I never flogged her! That's all gossip! Some enemy told you that!

IVAN ALEKSONDROVICH. What are you talking about? I don't give a hang for your enemies or your sergeant's widow. But you can't flog me! You'd better not try it! Who are you anyhow? I'll pay all right, but I haven't any money just now. But it's on the way.

ANTON ANTONOVICH. [Aside.] What a hole I'm in! [A light breaks in upon him from IVAN ALEKSONDROVICH's last words. Attempting to bribe him.] Money? If it's a question of money, I am at your service, sir. My pleasantest duty is to help out in occasions of this kind.

IVAN ALEKSONDROVICH. Money! You'll lend me some? Then I can pay the landlord at once. I only want two hundred rubles—or even less.

ANTON ANTONOVICH. [Holding him bills.] Just two hundred rubles. [Putting up purse.] [Aside.] The money's well spent.

IVAN ALEKSONDROVICH. [Accepting the money.] This is very good of you! As soon as I get home, I'll send you the money. I am very particular about such things. This is really very good of you.

ANTON ANTONOVICH. [Assuming an air of confidence in himself.] I am only too glad of the opportunity.

IVAN ALEKSONDROVICH. Ei, Osip! Call that waiter. [To ANTON ANTONOVICH and PETR IVANOVICH DOBCHINSKI.] Won't you sit down, gentlemen? Take a chair.

ANTON ANTONOVICH. Don't bother. Don't bother.

IVAN ALEKSONDROVICH. Do sit down. At first I didn't realize that you came to pay a friendly call. I must confess, I thought that you'd come to take me . . . [To PETR IVANOVICH DOBCHINSKI.] Won't you take a chair?

[Both sit down. PETR IVANOVICH BOBCHINSKI sticks his head in through the opening of the door and listens.

ANTON ANTONOVICH. [Getting friendly.] You must know, sir, that I, representing the government, and Petr Ivanovich Dobchinski, a representative citizen, determined to investigate the inn to see how visitors are treated. Most prefects don't trouble about such matters. But I, like a good Christian, take a friendly interest in the neighborhood. And this is my reward—such a pleasant chance acquaintance.

IVAN ALEKSONDROVICH. The pleasure is mine, I assure you. Without your aid I am afraid that I should have tarried here quite a little while.

ANTON ANTONOVICH. [Aloud.] But, may I ask where you go from here?

IVAN ALEKSONDROVICH. To my home in Saratov.

ANTON ANTONOVICH. [Aside, with an ironical expression on his face.] Saratov! He confesses it! [Aloud.] In the government service, I presume? A noble career. And quite a traveler. Such an opportunity for a young man! Traveling for your own pleasure?

IVAN ALEKSONDROVICH. No, I'm bound for Saratov. My father sent for me. He thought I wasn't getting on fast enough in St. Petersburg.

ANTON ANTONOVICH. Are you staying in Saratov long?

IVAN ALEKSONDROVICH. Can't say. My father is getting old and obstinate. I shall tell him frankly that I will not waste my life in a little hole in the country.

ANTON ANTONOVICH. Quite right! The country's no place for a young man nowadays. Here there are none of the comforts of a city. You must find this inn very unpleasant.

IVAN ALEKSONDROVICH. Horrid room! Horrid bed! Visitors last night!

ANTON ANTONOVICH. Just to think of it! And the room not well-lighted either!

IVAN ALEKSONDROVICH. And the fool landlord won't give me any candles.

ANTON ANTONOVICH. If only I dared suggest it . . .

IVAN ALEKSONDROVICH. Yes?

ANTON ANTONOVICH. No, no, I am afraid that you would misconstrue it.

IVAN ALEKSONDROVICH. Why, what is it?

ANTON ANTONOVICH. No, I am not worthy of the honor. But there is such a splendid room up at my house, light,

warm, cosy . . . No, I realize that this is too much to ask! Please don't be offended at such presumption.

IVAN ALEKSONDROVICH. On the contrary, I accept with a great deal of pleasure. It will be much more agreeable in a private house.

ANTON ANTONOVICH. You don't know how happy you've made me. And my wife—wait until you see my wife! The deepest feelings of my heart are touched.

IVAN ALEKSONDROVICH. This is very kind of you.

Enter OSIP, accompanied by the WAITER. PETR IVANOVICH BOCHINSKI looks in at the door.

WAITER. You wanted to speak to me, sir?

IVAN ALEKSONDROVICH. Bring me my bill.

WAITER. You've been getting bills every day.

IVAN ALEKSONDROVICH. I threw them in the wastebasket. What's the account?

WAITER. You paid for one lunch and one dinner. After that you said, "Charge it!"

IVAN ALEKSONDROVICH. Idiot! How much do I owe?

ANTON ANTONOVICH. I am sorry for this annoyance. There is no hurry. [To the WAITER.] Don't bother the gentleman. His credit's good.

IVAN ALEKSONDROVICH. Well, just as you say. I put myself entirely in your hands.

[*Puts the money back. The WAITER leaves. PETR IVANOVICH BOCHINSKI looks in at the door.*

ANTON ANTONOVICH. Now wouldn't you like to inspect some of our philanthropic institutions—the hospital, for instance?

IVAN ALEKSONDROVICH. What is there to see?

ANTON ANTONOVICH. You will be interested in seeing how it is managed.

IVAN ALEKSONDROVICH. All right, if you wish it.

[Petr Ivanovich Bobchinski shoves his head in at the door.

ANTON ANTONOVICH. And then, if you like, we can visit the school of applied sciences.

IVAN ALEKSONDROVICH. With pleasure, if you insist.

ANTON ANTONOVICH. And after that—I know you will enjoy it—I'll take you to the county jail.

IVAN ALEKSONDROVICH. Jail!

ANTON ANTONOVICH. The prisoners are so well treated. We'll be glad to have you.

IVAN ALEKSONDROVICH. Thanks awfully, but suppose we take in the other things.

ANTON ANTONOVICH. Just as you wish. Do you prefer your own carriage, or will you come with me in my droshki.

IVAN ALEKSONDROVICH. Perhaps I'd better go with you.

ANTON ANTONOVICH. [To Petr Ivanovich Dobchinski.] Petr Ivanovich! Well, there won't be any room for you.

PETR IVANOVICH DOBCHINSKI. Don't mind me; I'll be all right.

ANTON ANTONOVICH. [To Petr Ivanovich Dobchinski.] Run as fast as you can. Deliver a couple of notes for me, one to Artemi Filippovich in his office, the other to my wife. [To Ivan Aleksandrovich.] I trust you'll pardon me if I write a line to my wife to prepare her for the reception of our honored guest.

IVAN ALEKSONDROVICH. Certainly. You'll find pen and ink on the table. Damn it, where's the paper? [Taking from wastebasket.] Will this bill do?

ANTON ANTONOVICH. Yes, that's all right. [*He takes the bill and writes, speaking to himself at the same time.*] We'll see how things go after lunch. We'll have native Madeira. It's not much to look at, but it'll make any man drunk.

[*Having written the notes, he hands them to PETR IVANOVICH DOBCHINSKI, who walks up to the door.*
PETR IVANOVICH BOBCHINSKI falls into the room.

ANTON ANTONOVICH. [To IVAN ALEKSONDROVICH.] Don't mind him. Won't you be so kind . . . I'll tell your valet to bring your things up to my house. [To OSIP.] My dear fellow, bring everything up to my house, to the police prefect's—anyone will tell you where I live. Will you be so kind . . . [*He lets IVAN ALEKSONDROVICH pass first, he goes after him, but having turned around he reproachfully says to PETR IVANOVICH BOBCHINSKI:*] Why the devil did you come in here? If you had to fall down here, why couldn't you go somewhere else?

[*He goes out; PETR IVANOVICH BOBCHINSKI goes out after him.*

END OF SECOND ACT.

ACT THIRD

SCENE—*The same as in Act I. The windows are open a little way.*

TIME—*About sunset.*

DISCOVERED—ANNA ANDREEVNA and MARYA ANTONOVNA are standing in the same position as at the end of Act I, as the curtain goes up. MARYA ANTONOVNA goes up to the looking glass.

ANNA ANDREEVNA. Three mortal hours and no news! For mercy's sake stop fussing with your dress. You make me nervous.

MARYA ANTONOVNA. [Going to the window.] Avdotya must be back soon. [Hairpins in her mouth. She looks out of the window and shouts.] Oh, mother, mother, quick! Somebody's coming!

ANNA ANDREEVNA. Who? Where? You're always seeing things. Why, bless my soul! A little man in a long coat. O dear, O dear! [Trying to adjust her eyeglasses which are tangled in a knot.] Who is it?

MARYA ANTONOVNA. It's Petr Ivanovich Dobchinski, mother.

ANNA ANDREEVNA. Dobchinski, nonsense! You're crazy. It isn't Dobchinski at all! [Waves her handkerchief.] Say, you! Come here, quick! Where are they? Has my husband seen him? Is he a nice man? Answer,

can't you? [Getting away from the window a bit, and with anger.] The mean old thing! Always stands on ceremony. Slow as a snail!

Enter PETR IVANOVICH DOBCHINSKI, having passed the windows, from the door on the right, and later MISHKA.

ANNA ANDREEVNA. Well, well, well, what's the news? Why don't you say something? Nobody ever tells me anything!

PETR IVANOVICH DOBCHINSKI. Just a moment, just a moment, Anna Andreevna. Indeed, indeed, I am so out of breath . . . Why, it's all I can do to get my breath! I ran to see you just as fast as my legs would carry me. [Sees MARYA ANTONOVNA.] Ah, Marya Antonovna, how is the young lady this afternoon? Need I ask? Fresh as a daisy.

MARYA ANTONOVNA. Very . . .

ANNA ANDREEVNA. [To MARYA ANTONOVNA.] You're nothing of the sort! Do give your elders a chance to speak! [To PETR IVANOVICH DOBCHINSKI.] Now tell me about it. What's he like? Who was there? Is he a general? Does he wax his mustache?

PETR IVANOVICH DOBCHINSKI. Here's a note from Anton Antonovich. [Hands her the note.]

ANNA ANDREEVNA. [Taking the note, but not reading it.] I wonder what he's said!

PETR IVANOVICH DOBCHINSKI. Not a general, exactly, but so refined and with such elegant manners.

ANNA ANDREEVNA. Gracious me! He must be the man they wrote my husband about.

PETR IVANOVICH DOBCHINSKI. The very same man. And I was the first one to recognize him—with Petr Ivanovich.

ANNA ANDREEVNA. Well, then, tell me, what's it all about?

PETR IVANOVICH DOBCHINSKI. The Lord be praised, everything went off very well. At first he was very stern with Antonovich, yes, he was very angry; he said that everything was very bad at that hotel, and that he would not come to the house at all; and that he wouldn't go to jail on account of your husband. But later, when he was convinced of Anton Antonovich's innocence, after a heart to heart talk, he changed his mind, thank the Lord, and everything went off well. Now they have gone on a tour of inspection. I tell you, there were times when Anton Antonovich was awfully frightened; I must confess that I was a bit scared myself.

ANNA ANDREEVNA. You, what have you to be afraid of? You're not in the service.

PETR IVANOVICH DOBCHINSKI. Yes, that's true, too. Still a man feels a kind of awe when a grandee speaks.

ANNA ANDREEVNA. Nonsense, what's that got to do with it? Come to the point! Is he good looking? Is he old, or young?

PETR IVANOVICH DOBCHINSKI. Young, a very young man, not over twenty-three, but he speaks like a man of experience. "Since you will have it so," he said, "I will go here or there . . ." [He swings his arms.] And he said it so nicely, too!

ANNA ANDREEVNA. Dark, or light?

PETR IVANOVICH DOBCHINSKI. Why, I shouldn't exactly like to say which. Some might say one thing, some might say the other. His hair is . . . a little bit red.

ANNA ANDREEVNA. Stupid! [Sees note in hand.] Oh, the note! [Reads.] "I hasten to inform you, my dear, that

my prospects were very dark, but trusting in a kind Providence for two extra dill pickles and a portion of caviar—one ruble and twenty-five kopecks . . .” [She stops.] What does this mean? What does he mean by dill pickles?

PETR IVANOVICH DOBCHINSKI. Oh, he had to write on an old bill.

ANNA ANDREEVNA. [Grunts and continues to read.] “. . . but trusting in a kind Providence, everything will come out all right. The revizór is coming to stay with us. Get the spare room ready and have a good meal. Have Abdulin send up some of that native Madeira. I'll make it hot for him if he don't. Kissing, my dear, your little hand, I remain, Your loving [turns the page] lobster, one ruble! . . . Glory be! . . . Mishka!

[She runs to the door and shouts.

PETR IVANOVICH DOBCHINSKI. Mishka, Mishka, Mishka!

MISHKA enters from the first door on the right.

ANNA ANDREEVNA. [To MISHKA.] Mishka, take this note—no, wait, give it to Sidor. Tell him to run to Abdulin's for wine. You stay here and get the room ready. Sheets, towels, soap . . . [She counts off on her fingers.] Light the lamp here . . .

PETR IVANOVICH DOBCHINSKI. Well, now Anna Andreevna, I'll run along and see how he's inspecting up there.

ANNA ANDREEVNA. Go right along! I'm not keeping you!

ANNA ANDREEVNA. [To MARYA ANTONOVNA.] Oh, my dear, we must get dressed. The revizór is coming to visit us! Dear me! Those city men are so finicky!

[*Exeunt ANNA ANDREEVNA and MARYA ANTONOVNA.*

OSIP enters through the front door with a *chemodan* on his head.

OSIP. Where shall I put this?

MISHKA. Put it in there.

[*Pointing towards IVAN ALEKSONDROVICH's room.*

OSIP. Too heavy! Won't go a step further. Not a step further. Must rest a moment. All worn out.

MISHKA. Say, when's the general coming?

OSIP. General? What general?

MISHKA. Your master.

OSIP. My master, he ain't no general.

MISHKA. Not a general!

OSIP. Well, not exactly, but—generals ain't in it with him!

MISHKA. What is he, then? Bigger than a general?

OSIP. Bigger!

MISHKA. Then that's why I had to get out the purple blanket with the blue border!

OSIP. And suppose you get me something to eat.

MISHKA. O, there's nothing ready for you folks yet. Only common victuals! But just wait awhile. You'll see!

OSIP. Can't wait. What's you got now?

MISHKA. Nothing but sour cabbage soup.

OSIP. Gimme some.

MISHKA. Take this out first.

OSIP. Give us a lift.

[Both carry the chemodan into the side room.]

The police sergeants open both sides of the door. Enter in succession: IVAN ALEKSONDROVICH, feeling good, ANTON ANTONOVICH, ARTEMI FILIPPOVICH, LUKA LUKICH, PETR IVANOVICH DOBCHINSKI, and PETR IVANOVICH BOBCHINSKI. The latter wears a piece of surgeon's plaster on his nose. ANTON ANTONOVICH points out to the sergeants the piece of paper on the floor; both run to pick it up, rashly pushing one another.

IVAN ALEKSONDROVICH. . . . wonderful institutions. Jolly good idea, this, of showing people around. In other cities, officials no account. Didn't show me a single, solitary thing.

ANTON ANTONOVICH. [Winks to the sergeants to get out; they go.] In other cities, I dare say, the city officials think only of themselves; here we think only of our duty.

IVAN ALEKSONDROVICH. That lunch was great. Do you lunch like that every day?

ANTON ANTONOVICH. It was prepared expressly for [The others signal to him not to give the plot away.] . . . for a chance visitor like yourself.

IVAN ALEKSONDROVICH. Epicurus was right. One lives to pluck the flowers of pleasure. What was the name of that fish?

ARTEMI FILIPPOVICH. [Running up to IVAN ALEKSONDROVICH.] The very best pickled octopus.

IVAN ALEKSONDROVICH. Wonderful fish! And where did we have that sumptuous repast? In the morgue?

ARTEMI FILIPPOVICH. No, sir, in the hospital.

IVAN ALEKSONDROVICH. To be sure.—Disinfectants!—But the patients, did they all get well?

ARTEMI FILIPPOVICH. All except ten. Due to the wonderful treatment and system. Since I have been in charge, they never tarry here very long. Trust me, I see to that.

ANTON ANTONOVICH. The planning of this superb system is due to the brain work of the chief of police. Any other prefect—well, we won't go into that—but, even when I'm in bed, it keeps me awake contriving how to impress my superior officers. Not that I am looking for honors at all,—they're nothing in themselves,—only I do like to be appreciated.

ARTEMI FILIPPOVICH. [An ironical wink aside.] Anton Antonovich, we all know your worth!

IVAN ALEKSONDROVICH. Beautifully put! I am a bit of a philosopher myself. Sometimes I do it in poetry; sometimes in prose. Speaking of diversions, where's the club here? Do you play cards?

ANTON ANTONOVICH. Gambling! Clubs! No such place in town! Never touched a card in my life!

LUKA LUKICH. [To the man next to him.] He did me out of a hundred last night.

ANTON ANTONOVICH. My precious time belongs to my country.

ANNA ANDREEVNA in the straw colored dress, and MARYA ANTONOVNA in the figured dress, enter from the first door on the left. All rise from their seats and remain standing until asked to sit down by IVAN ALEKSONDROVICH.

ANTON ANTONOVICH. [To IVAN ALEKSONDROVICH.] May I take the liberty of introducing my family? My wife . . . my daughter . . .

[All bow. IVAN ALEKSONDROVICH *shakes hands with the ladies.*

IVAN ALEKSONDROVICH. I am extremely glad, ladies, to have this opportunity of meeting you.

ANNA ANDREEVNA. The pleasure is all ours, I assure you.

IVAN ALEKSONDROVICH. Pardon me, madam, if I contradict you. My pleasure is infinite.

ANNA ANDREEVNA. So good of you to say so, but really it is too much. Won't you have a chair?

IVAN ALEKSONDROVICH. Great pleasure even to be standing near you. But since you insist . . . [ANNA ANDREEVNA *sits down on the sofa, he near her.*] It gives me great pleasure to sit so near you.

ANNA ANDREEVNA. Oh, you can't mean it! . . . It must be very stupid for you here, after St. Petersburg society.

IVAN ALEKSONDROVICH. Perfectly deadly. In St. Petersburg, we live; *comprenez-vous?* But this evening [*He throws glances at ANNA ANDREEVNA and shows off.*] rewards me for all I have suffered.

ANNA ANDREEVNA. You flatter me. We country folks . . .

IVAN ALEKSONDROVICH. But the country is charming—little hills, little streams, little birds,—but it isn't St. Petersburg. That's the place for me. On the best of terms with everybody—dine every Sunday with my chief—only one in the department that gets asked. And when I go into the office, you ought to see those clerks stand around. The guard salutes me on the stairs with, “Can't I shine your shoes” . . . [To ANTON ANTONOVICH and the others.] Sit down, gentlemen. Make yourselves comfortable.



MATTHEW GRISWOLD ELY, 1910 S.
as Anna Andreevna.



ANTON ANTONOVICH. Not for a moment. } [All at
ARTEMI FILIPPOVICH. We'll stand. } the same
LUKA LUKICH. I never sit down. } time.

IVAN ALEKSONDROVICH. Please don't stand on ceremony. [ANTON ANTONOVICH and the rest sit down.] On the contrary, I wish to forget my rank and travel incognito. But such is fame. They always find me out! They nudge one another and whisper, "That is Ivan Aleksandrovich." Once I was even taken for the commander-in-chief; the soldiers ran out of the guardhouse and saluted me.

ANNA ANDREEVNA. Not really!

IVAN ALEKSONDROVICH. And the actresses I know! and the authors! Even the great Pushkin and I are chums. I often used to say to him, "Well, Pushkin, dear fellow, how are things?" "Oh, so-so, old boy," he would say to me . . . He was a genius. But I'm something of a writer myself.

ANNA ANDREEVNA. An author! How delightful! Do you write for the papers?

IVAN ALEKSONDROVICH. All of them—little things—*Le Mariage de Figaro*, *Fra Diavolo*, or *Norma*—written on the spur of the moment, just to please the managers. Of course I don't want it known, but Voltaire is my *nom de plume*.

ANNA ANDREEVNA. Do tell! And you are Voltaire!

IVAN ALEKSONDROVICH. Yes, I live for my art. At my *salons* in St. Petersburg one meets all the literary lions of the day. [Facing everybody.] Drop in, when you're in town.

ANNA ANDREEVNA. I'd just love to! Such elegance!

IVAN ALEKSONDROVICH. Don't mention it! You should just see my dinners. Watermelon—seven hundred rubles!

Soup expressed from Paris! Oh, the smell of it! You can smell it down five flights of stairs . . . Of course, figuratively speaking, as you must know, I live on the first floor. My morning levées are jammed with all the nobility buzzing like bees. Even the Minister of the Interior is there! [ANTON ANTONOVICH and the rest get up very timidly from their seats.] When Petrovich was bombed—of course I didn't want his place, but what was I to do? Princes, generals, counts, they all threw it over. It was too much for them. I took it. They insisted. I was in my bathrobe, but I was afraid that it would reach the Czar. So I said: "If it is your will, gentlemen, I accept this duty; so be it, I accept. But remember, if I undertake it, no fooling. I have a very sharp eye." Oh, I'm a human earthquake! [ANTON ANTONOVICH and all present shake from fear. IVAN ALEKSONDROVICH continues with increased fervor.] I don't stand for half measures. Even the Imperial Council is afraid of me. But I'm not afraid of the devil himself. So they promote me every day. I'm sure of my position . . .

[*He slips off his seat almost onto the floor, but the functionaries help him with great reverence.*

ANTON ANTONOVICH. [Shaking with his whole body, goes up to IVAN ALEKSONDROVICH. He tries to speak. Stammers.]

IVAN ALEKSONDROVICH. [In a quick, abrupt voice.] What's the matter with you?

ANTON ANTONOVICH. [Still stammers.]

IVAN ALEKSONDROVICH. [In the same voice as before.] Are you drunk?

ANTON ANTONOVICH. [Agitated. Still stammers.]
 Y-o-u-r E-x-c-e-l-l-e-n-c-y! Will you not rest? Everything is ready.

IVAN ALEKSONDROVICH. Nonsense, rest! all right, all right, rest! Gentlemen, the lunch was bully. [Declaiming.] Oh, those toothsome octopoi!

[Goes into the room on the side, the police prefect—
 ANTON ANTONOVICH—after him.

PETR IVANOVICH BOCHINSKI. [To PETR IVANOVICH DOBCHINSKI.] A man, Petr Ivanovich! He's what I call a man! Never before have I seen such a great man. I nearly died of fear. What do you think is his rank, Petr Ivanovich?

PETR IVANOVICH DOBCHINSKI. I think he must be something like a general.

PETR IVANOVICH BOCHINSKI. Generals aren't in it with him. At the very least he belongs to the generality. Even the Imperial Council are afraid of him! Ammos Fedrovich and Korobkin should know of this. Good-bye, Anna Andreevna.

PETR IVANOVICH DOBCHINSKI. Good-bye, godmother.

[Both go out through the street door.

ARTEMI FILIPPOVICH. [To LUKA LUKICH.] Isn't it awful? We aren't even in our uniforms! Suppose he complains to St. Petersburg! [They walk out thoughtfully, saying:] Good-bye, madam.

ANNA ANDREEVNA. Isn't he a nice man?

MARYA ANTONOVNA. Charming!

ANNA ANDREEVNA. Such refined manners—really a man of the world—so genteel and all that. Isn't he grand! I adore people like him. And I made a big impression on him, too. He didn't take his eyes off me once.

MARYA ANTONOVNA. Oh, mother, how can you say that? It was me he was looking at.

ANNA ANDREEVNA. Have it your own way, but . . . [ANTON ANTONOVICH comes back from the first door on the left. Enters on tip-toe.] Sh-Sh- [To ANTON ANTONOVICH.] Well?

ANTON ANTONOVICH. I wish I hadn't given him so much to drink. Well, a man speaks the truth when he's drunk. Even if it's only half true, what a hole we're in!

ANNA ANDREEVNA. I wasn't afraid of him. I was brought up in polite society.

ANTON ANTONOVICH. But you were entirely too familiar with him, my dear; you treated him like Petr Ivanovich.

ANNA ANDREEVNA. Don't let that trouble you [Looking at MARYA ANTONOVNA.] We know a thing or two.

[*Looks at her daughter.*

ANTON ANTONOVICH. Oh, you don't understand! What have I been through! [Opens the door and speaks through it.] Mishka, call sergeants Svistunov and Derzhimorda. [After a short pause.] Things are coming round all right, after all. At the end I didn't know where I stood with his yarns and his allegories. But I got him, and he's drunk, and in my bed!

OSIP comes in from the second door on the left. All run towards him, beckoning with their fingers.

ANNA ANDREEVNA. Come here, my dear fellow.

ANTON ANTONOVICH. Hush.—Is he asleep?

OSIP. Not yet. Bilious.

ANNA ANDREEVNA. What's your name?

OSIP. Osip, thank you.

ANTON ANTONOVICH. [To his wife and daughter.]

Stop a minute. Let me talk to him. [To OSIP.] Did you get enough to eat?

OSIP. Lots! Full to here.

[Shows with hand that they filled him up to his nose.

ANNA ANDREEVNA. Now tell me, does your master know all the nobility?

OSIP. [Scratches back of his head for loss of what to answer; finally:] Not quite all.

MARYA ANTONOVNA. Osip, I think your master is awfully handsome.

ANNA ANDREEVNA. What's your master's title.

OSIP. The usual title.

ANTON ANTONOVICH. Rubbish. [To OSIP.] You listen to me! Your master's very severe, isn't he?

OSIP. Very.

ANTON ANTONOVICH. You're a good fellow. When one travels, tea never does any one any harm. [He hands him two bills.] Here's some change for tea.

OSIP. [Accepting the money.] Thank you, sir.

ANTON ANTONOVICH. Don't mention it. It's nothing at all. And now tell me . . .

ANNA ANDREEVNA. What are your master's favorite eyes?

ANTON ANTONOVICH. [Provoked.] Now stop it! Give me a chance! [To OSIP.] Now tell me, how can we best please your master?

OSIP. Plenty to eat and plenty to drink.

ANTON ANTONOVICH. Lots of good things, eh?

OSIP. Yes, lots of good things. And he wants me treated right, too.

ANTON ANTONOVICH. Now you're talking! That other money was for tea; this . . . [Gives him more money.] is for sugar.

OSIP. Thank you, sir. I'll drink your health.

ANTON ANTONOVICH. Heaven forbid! You'll wake him!

ANNA ANDREEVNA. Come Marya, I have a secret to tell you.

[MARYA ANTONOVNA and ANNA ANDREEVNA go out through the first door on the left.

ANTON ANTONOVICH. [To his wife and daughter.] Secrets! As if I wanted to know! [To OSIP.] Now see here . . .

SVISTUNOV and DERZHIMORDA enter through the street door.

ANTON ANTONOVICH. [To the sergeants.] Sh-sh! Quiet! He's asleep. What the devil do you want?

DERZHIMORDA. You ordered me to come!

ANTON ANTONOVICH. Sh-sh! [Puts his hand on the sergeant's mouth.] Donkey! Why can't you keep still? [To OSIP.] When your master wakes, we're at his service.

[Osip goes into his master's room.] Stay by the front door. Don't leave it for a second. Don't admit anyone, particularly tradesmen. And if anyone of them looks as if he had a petition, dissuade him. [He goes through the form of kicking.] Sh-sh-!

[He goes out the front door on his tip-toes, after the sergeants.

END OF THIRD ACT.

ACT FOURTH.

SCENE—*The same room as in Act I.*

TIME—*Middle of the forenoon, two days later.*

Enter quietly, almost on tip-toe: AMMOS FEDROVICH, ARTEMI FILIPPOVICH, IVAN KUZMICH, LUKA LUKICH, PETR IVANOVICH BOCHINSKI, and PETR IVANOVICH DOCHINSKI. The whole scene is spoken in an undertone.

AMMOS FEDROVICH. [Forming them into a semicircle.] Sh-! Attention! May the Lord be with us! He knows the Czar! He belongs to the Imperial Council! You, Petr Ivanovich, come here; you, Petr Ivanovich, go there.

[Both PETR IVANOVICHES run to their places on tip-toe.

ARTEMI FILIPPOVICH. Ammos Fedrovich, we must do something.

AMMOS FEDROVICH. Something? What?

ARTEMI FILIPPOVICH. You know what I mean!

AMMOS FEDROVICH. Bribe?

ARTEMI FILIPPOVICH. Bribe!

AMMOS FEDROVICH. Criminally liable. Remember, he is an official. I have it! We'll all subscribe to a national monument—and give him the subscription.

IVAN KUZMICH. Or we can pretend it's money lost in the mail.

ARTEMI FILIPPOVICH. No, you can't do that in a well-regulated government. We can't do it all together. One by one. Well, you begin. [AMMOS FEDROVICH L. C.

AMMOS FEDROVICH. No, you must approach our honored visitor first. He had lunch in your institution.

ARTEMI FILIPPOVICH. No, Luka Lukich is the man, our distinguished superintendent.

LUKA LUKICH. No, I cannot, I cannot, gentlemen. I am so nervous.—In the presence of my superiors, I completely collapse.

ARTEMI FILIPPOVICH. Under the circumstances, [To AMMOS FEDROVICH] there's no one better than yourself. You are so eloquent—a real Cicero.

AMMOS FEDROVICH. A Cicero! This is too much. Of course I may wax eloquent over greyhound pups, but . . .

ALL PRESENT. [Catching hold of him.] Ammos Fedrovich, don't desert us! Save us! Save us!

AMMOS FEDROVICH. Release me, gentlemen.

[At this time are heard footsteps and slight coughing from IVAN ALEKSENDROVICH'S room. Vying with one another, they all run to the street door. In trying to get out, they crowd themselves together, and squeeze one of them pretty hard. Subdued shrieks are heard. Several more subdued shrieks are heard; all go out; the stage remains empty for a second.]

IVAN ALEKSENDROVICH enters from his room. He looks sleepy. He stretches himself, yawns, and acts as one with a big head caused by a night's spree. AMMOS FEDROVICH comes in from the door on the right, beholds IVAN ALEKSENDROVICH, and begins to shake at the knees, when IVAN ALEKSENDROVICH sees him.

AMMOS FEDROVICH. [In pose of attention, holding on to his sword, in agitated voice.] I have the honor to introduce myself; I am the judge of this county, the Collegiate Assessor, Ammos Fedrovich Laypkin-Tyapkin.

IVAN ALEKSONDROVICH. Won't you take a chair? The local judge, did you say?

[Both sit down facing each other.]

AMMOS FEDROVICH. [Reciting, as though prepared by heart.] In 1816, I was appointed for three years at the request of the nobility, and have continued in my duties to this day.

IVAN ALEKSONDROVICH. To be a judge must be profitable, I should think. [AMMOS FEDROVICH, growing more nervous because of pulling his hand full of bills out of his pocket.] What have you got there?

AMMOS FEDROVICH. [Losing himself almost completely, drops a bill on the floor.] Nothing.

IVAN ALEKSONDROVICH. But you dropped a bill!

AMMOS FEDROVICH. [Shivering with his whole body.] Impossible!

IVAN ALEKSONDROVICH. [Picking up the money.] But you did, too! It's money.

AMMOS FEDROVICH. [Aside, while he is picking it up.] Criminally liable!

IVAN ALEKSONDROVICH. If it would be no inconvenience, might I borrow it?

AMMOS FEDROVICH. Surely, surely, with the greatest of pleasure! [He grows a little bolder.]

IVAN ALEKSONDROVICH. You see, I have spent every kopek—here and there. But I shall surely return it to you just as soon as I get home.



CHARLES ROBERTS HOPKINS, 1907,
as Ammos Fedrovich.

AMMOS FEDROVICH. Not at all, not at all. We understand each other. I consider it an honor . . . Indeed, although my abilities are limited, still with my ardor and devotion to the authorities . . . [He gets up from the chair and assumes a pose of attention.] But I dare not disturb you with my presence any longer. What are your orders?

IVAN ALEKSONDROVICH. Orders? What orders?

AMMOS FEDROVICH. Why, have you no orders for the local courts?

IVAN ALEKSONDROVICH. What for? I have no use for the courts just now. No, no orders. All the same, I shall not forget your kindness.

[AMMOS FEDROVICII bows and goes out feeling very triumphant.

IVAN KUZMICH enters from the door on the right; wears uniform and assumes attention upon entering.

IVAN KUZMICH. I have the honor to introduce myself. I am the Postmaster, the Aulic Councillor, Ivan Kuzmich Shpekin.

IVAN ALEKSONDROVICH. Glad to see you. Sit down. You're a resident of this city, aren't you?

IVAN KUZMICH. Yes, sir.

IVAN ALEKSONDROVICH. Fine town. Not many people about. But well, it's not the capital. Am I right?

IVAN KUZMICH. Quite right.

IVAN ALEKSONDROVICH. [Looks into IVAN KUZMICH's eyes, sizing him up for a loan.] Funny thing happened. I've spent every single kopek. Could you possibly lend me three hundred rubles?

IVAN KUZMICH. I am honored. [Takes out a pocket-book with money, giving.] I am only too glad to be of service.

IVAN ALEKSONDROVICH. So good of you. Hard to be without money when traveling.

IVAN KUZMICH. Yes, sir. [Gets up, assumes attention.] I will not disturb you any longer. Have you any suggestions concerning the postoffice?

IVAN ALEKSONDROVICH. I have done all that's necessary.

[IVAN KUZMICH bows and goes out. IVAN ALEKSONDROVICH looks at the money—pleasingly smiles and pockets it.

LUKA LUKICH enters from the right as though he were pushed in; when the door opens, a voice is heard saying, "Cheer up."

LUKA LUKICH. Permit me to introduce myself. I am the superintendent of the schools, the Titular Councillor Khlopov, Luka Lukich.

IVAN ALEKSONDROVICH. How are you? Extremely glad to see you. Won't you sit down. [LUKA LUKICH sits down. IVAN ALEKSONDROVICH treats him to a cigar, but he is reluctant in accepting.] Won't you have a cigar? [LUKA LUKICH tries to light the cigar at the wrong end, still shivering.] You'd better try the other end! [LUKA LUKICH is so nervous now that he drops the cigar on the floor, and hesitates whether to pick it up or not.] You don't seem to be much of a smoker.

LUKA LUKICH. [Stretching the words.] Courage—all gone.—Your High—your Exc—your Illust—

IVAN ALEKSONDROVICH. Courage? Nonsense! Brace up! We shall be great friends.—What was your name?

LUKA LUKICH. Luka Lukich, Luka Lukich.

IVAN ALEKSONDROVICH. To be sure, Luka Lukich. Always did like that name! Lots of little Luka's I suppose?

LUKA LUKICH. Only five, but two are grown up.

IVAN ALEKSONDROVICH. Two grown up—just to think of it. What do you call the little ones?

LUKA LUKICH. Nikolai, Ivan, Elizabeth, Mary, and Peregryta.

IVAN ALEKSONDROVICH. Indeed.

LUKA LUKICH. [Getting up.] I will not presume to trouble you any longer. Your time is precious.

IVAN ALEKSONDROVICH. Don't go. It couldn't be spent to better advantage. Your conversation is so entertaining. What did you say that your name was?

LUKA LUKICH. Luka Lukich.

IVAN ALEKSONDROVICH. Luka Lukich, would you do me a favor? Between friends, I am a bit short of funds. Lend me four hundred rubles—

LUKA LUKICH. Four hundred rubles! I haven't got it!

IVAN ALEKSONDROVICH. Well, then, a hundred will do.

LUKA LUKICH. [Searching his pockets.] But I've only got forty!

IVAN ALEKSONDROVICH. Look again! Look in your inside pocket.

LUKA LUKICH. But I haven't any more!

IVAN ALEKSONDROVICH. Well, let it go. No matter. Forty is better than nothing.

[*He gives him the money and he accepts it.*

LUKA LUKICH. Guess I'll go now.

IVAN ALEKSONDROVICH. Most agreeable call!

[*Goes out through the door on the right. IVAN ALEKSONDROVICH escorts him.*

IVAN ALEKSONDROVICH. [IVAN ALEKSONDROVICH, when alone, begins to count his money. He develops a smile of satisfaction according to the increase in the sum. Having pocketed the money, he calls OSIP.] Osip, bring me pen and ink. I want to write a letter. [Sits down at the table.]

OSIP. [In the doorway.] Yes, sir.

[OSIP comes in from the second door on the left.

IVAN ALEKSONDROVICH. [Laughing and whistling until OSIP comes in with the paper and the ink.] You see, stupid, it's come out all right.

OSIP. Yes, thank the Lord! But don't you know, Ivan Aleksondrovich . . .

IVAN ALEKSONDROVICH. Know what?

OSIP. You'd better leave town before it's too late!

IVAN ALEKSONDROVICH. [While writing.] Nonsense! Why?

OSIP. Just so. You've had your little fling. Why risk it any longer? Something's sure to happen. Let's go while we can. Fine horses here.

IVAN ALEKSONDROVICH. What's the hurry? We'll go to-morrow.

OSIP. To-morrow? Now! They've taken you for somebody else!

IVAN ALEKSONDROVICH. I know it.

OSIP. And you're late now! What will your father say? We can get fast horses here and be home in no time.

IVAN ALEKSONDROVICH. All right, I'll go. Mail this letter and order the horses. But get good ones! [Still

writing.] Tryapichkin will just die of laughing when he gets this letter!

OSIP. Sir, I'll send the letter to the post to save time, and pack up.

IVAN ALEKSONDROVICH. Very well. Bring me a candle.

OSIP. [OSIP goes out through the second door on the right. He leaves the door open, talks back of stage.] Say, take this letter to the post. No stamps—government business. And order up a team . . . fastest horses. My master pays no post fare. He's in the government service. [Short pause.] Wait a minute.

[Comes back with a lighted candle, and goes up to his master.

IVAN ALEKSONDROVICH. [Sealing the letter.] I wonder what's his address. He'd rather move than pay his rent. Oh, I'll try Pochtamskaya.

[He seals the letter with sealing-wax; then writes the address. Noise is heard outside the house.

DERZHIMORDA'S VOICE. Where are you going, "Whiskers"? Against orders! Can't let you in!

TRADESMEN'S VOICES. Let us in. You can't keep us out. We're here on business.

DERZHIMORDA'S VOICE. Get away. Get away, I tell you. He won't see you. He's asleep.

[The noise becomes louder.

IVAN ALEKSONDROVICH. What's the matter there, Osip? Look out of the window.

OSIP. [Looking through the window.] Tradesmen trying to get into the house.

IVAN ALEKSONDROVICH. Tell them I'm busy.

OSIP. They've got petitions and all kinds of presents for you.

IVAN ALEKSONDROVICH. [Going to the door on the right.] Presents! Let them in. Let them in. [To OSIP, handing him the letter.] I shall graciously accept their presents. You go mail that letter.

[OSIP goes out through the second door on the left.

The sergeants enter with their presents and petitions.

IVAN ALEKSONDROVICH. [Takes the petitions, opens one, and reads:] "To His Honorability of the Highness, the minister to the Financial, from the merchant Abdulin . . ." Where the devil did he get that title . . .

[He continues reading, under his breath.

MARYA ANTONOVNA enters from the first door on the left. She wears a different dress and a hand-knitted shawl over her shoulders.

MARYA ANTONOVNA. [Somewhat frightened.] Oh!

IVAN ALEKSONDROVICH. I beg your pardon?

MARYA ANTONOVNA. [Bashfully.] I didn't expect to find you here.

IVAN ALEKSONDROVICH. No?

MARYA ANTONOVNA. I thought mama was here.

IVAN ALEKSONDROVICH. But won't I do?

MARYA ANTONOVNA. Oh, I don't want to disturb you. Aren't you busy with something important?

IVAN ALEKSONDROVICH. [Showing off.] You disturb me? Ah no! You can make me very happy.

MARYA ANTONOVNA. Oh, that's how they talk in St. Petersburg.

IVAN ALEKSONDROVICH. But only to . . . you! May I offer you a chair? By rights, you should have a throne.

MARYA ANTONOVNA. Really, I . . . I wonder where mama can be. [MARYA sits down.]

IVAN ALEKSONDROVICH. [Sitting down next to her.] What a beautiful scarf.

MARYA ANTONOVNA. You're making fun of me.

IVAN ALEKSONDROVICH. That scarf! So close about your little neck!

MARYA ANTONOVNA. I don't understand. What queer weather we're having to-day.

IVAN ALEKSONDROVICH. What is the weather to me? My sunshine is in your smile!

MARYA ANTONOVNA. Now you stop! Will you write a verse in my album? It will help me to remember you. You must know lots of verses.

IVAN ALEKSONDROVICH. For you I'll do anything. Ask for any verse you like.

MARYA ANTONOVNA. Oh, . . . something good! Something new!

IVAN ALEKSONDROVICH. But I know so many!

MARYA ANTONOVNA. Tell the one you will write. I'd love to hear it.

IVAN ALEKSONDROVICH. How about this one? [Recites with a great deal of manner.] "Why do the heathen rage and the people imagine a vain thing?" How's that? I'd much rather tell you how I love you.

[He moves up his chair.

MARYA ANTONOVNA. Love, I do not understand love.

[MARYA ANTONOVNA moves her chair away.

IVAN ALEKSONDROVICH. Don't do that. It's so much pleasanter side by side.

MARYA ANTONOVNA. [Still moving away.] I think it's very pleasant over here.

IVAN ALEKSONDROVICH. [Moving up to her.] Exactly! Over here!

MARYA ANTONOVNA. [Again moving away.] I'd rather you'd stayed over there!

IVAN ALEKSONDROVICH. [Moving up to her.] Really? Then let's pretend that I am—over there. Ah, if I could only—! [Bending over her.]

MARYA ANTONOVNA. [Getting up to look out of the window.] Oh, what was it that flew by the window? Was it a crow?

IVAN ALEKSONDROVICH. [At her side. Kissing her on the shoulder, looks out of the window.] A crow!

MARYA ANTONOVNA. Oh, Ivan Aleksandrovich!

IVAN ALEKSONDROVICH. I couldn't help it! Honestly. Please forgive me. I love you so, I—

MARYA ANTONOVNA. What do you take me for?

IVAN ALEKSONDROVICH. It was out of love for you, truly. Out of love . . . Marya Antonovna, don't be angry. [Falls on his knees.] I ask you on my knees.

ANNA ANDREEVNA, in a new dress, enters from the first room on the left.

ANNA ANDREEVNA. Well, of all the . . . !

IVAN ALEKSONDROVICH. The devil!

ANNA ANDREEVNA. What does this mean, young lady. What kind of behavior is this?

MARYA ANTONOVNA. Oh, mama, . . . I . . . !

ANNA ANDREEVNA. [Pointing to the first room on the left.] Off to your room. And don't you come out again. [MARYA ANTONOVNA goes to her room in tears.] Pardon me, but I was so surprised . . .

IVAN ALEKSONDROVICH. [Drops on his knees.] Don't you see, dear lady, that I'm in love? In love!

ANNA ANDREEVNA. On your knees again! Get up! I am afraid the floor is awfully dusty.

IVAN ALEKSONDROVICH. No! On my knees! By all means, on my knees! I want to hear my sentence. Is it life, or is it death?

ANNA ANDREEVNA. I am afraid I don't quite understand what you mean. Do I gather that you are declaring your love for my daughter?

IVAN ALEKSONDROVICH. No, I'm in love with you. My life hangs by a hair. If you will not love me, I am not worthy to live.

ANNA ANDREEVNA. Sir! I am a respectable married woman.

IVAN ALEKSONDROVICH. By Jove! That's so!

Enter MARYA ANTONOVNA.

MARYA ANTONOVNA. Well, of all the . . . !

ANNA ANDREEVNA. Well, what do you want?

MARYA ANTONOVNA. Really, mama, I don't know . . .

IVAN ALEKSONDROVICH. Anna Andreevna, be calm, perfectly calm. Bless us!

ANNA ANDREEVNA. So she's the one.

IVAN ALEKSONDROVICH. Decide! Life or death!

ANNA ANDREEVNA. [To MARYA ANTONOVNA.] You little idiot! Our guest on his knees, and then you come!

You deserve not to have my consent. You don't deserve any such good luck.

ANTON ANTONOVICH *enters from the street door, excitedly.*

ANTON ANTONOVICH. Your Excellency, have mercy on me. Do not ruin me!

IVAN ALEKSONDROVICH. What's the matter with you?

ANTON ANTONOVICH. The tradesmen's petition . . . I assure you upon my honor, there isn't a word of truth in what they say. They're all cheats themselves.

IVAN ALEKSONDROVICH. I've got something else to think about now.

ANTON ANTONOVICH. Liars! Not even a child would believe them. Everybody knows they're liars!

ANNA ANDREEVNA. Hush! Do you know the honor that Ivan Aleksandrovich has paid us? He has just asked for our daughter's hand.

ANTON ANTONOVICH. What? You're crazy! [To IVAN ALEKSONDROVICH.] Please, your Excellency, don't blame her! She's a little . . . ahem. [Tapping his forehead.] It runs in her family.

IVAN ALEKSONDROVICH. But it's true. I do ask for your daughter's hand.

ANTON ANTONOVICH. Your Excellency!

ANNA ANDREEVNA. Can't you believe what you're told?

IVAN ALEKSONDROVICH. It's no joke at all. I'm simply crazy, I love your daughter so.

ANTON ANTONOVICH. I cannot believe it! I do not deserve such an honor.

IVAN ALEKSONDROVICH. If you will consent to let me have your daughter's hand, I am ready to do . . . anything!

ANTON ANTONOVICH. I cannot believe it. You're joking, your Excellency.

ANNA ANDREEVNA. Oh, what a ninny you are! How often do you have to be told a thing?

ANTON ANTONOVICH. I cannot believe it.

IVAN ALEKSONDROVICH. Give me your daughter. G-i-v-e m-e y-o-u-r d-a-u-g-h-t-e-r. I am desperate. I am likely to do something rash. At any moment. If I shoot myself, you'll be responsible.

ANTON ANTONOVICH. All right! All right! Do as you like! She's mine—I mean she's yours . . . for better or for worse . . . That is, I don't know what I mean. I . . .

ANNA ANDREEVNA. Aren't you going to bless them?

ANTON ANTONOVICH. Why certainly. [ANTON ANTONOVICH joins their hands.] May God bless you, my children.

[IVAN ALEKSONDROVICH kisses MARYA ANTONOVNA.

ANTON ANTONOVICH. Hello! They are kissing each other. Kissing! Marya engaged to Ivan Aleksandrovich! That's the way to talk—that's the way.

Enter OSIP.

OSIP. The carriage is ready, sir.

IVAN ALEKSONDROVICH. What? Oh, very well.

ANTON ANTONOVICH. Why, are you going?

IVAN ALEKSONDROVICH. Er . . . yes.

ANTON ANTONOVICH. And when, that is . . . didn't you say something about a wedding?

IVAN ALEKSONDROVICH. Yes. Yes, of course. I'm only going for a day to my rich old uncle. I'll be back to-morrow.

ANTON ANTONOVICH. Pleasant journey and safe return.

IVAN ALEKSONDROVICH. [To MARYA ANTONOVNA.] Good-bye, my darling. Ah, I cannot express what's in my heart. Good-bye, my love.

ANTON ANTONOVICH. Have you everything you need for the journey? Didn't you say you were short of money?

IVAN ALEKSONDROVICH. Oh, no! no, no! [On second thought.] Well, if you can spare it.

ANTON ANTONOVICH. How much do you want?

IVAN ALEKSONDROVICH. You gave me two hundred before. No, not two hundred, but four hundred. That's right, isn't it? Give me the same now and it will make an even eight hundred.

ANTON ANTONOVICH. Very well. As if on purpose—all new bills.

IVAN ALEKSONDROVICH. Ah, first class. They say new bills bring new luck.

ANTON ANTONOVICH. That's true, too.

IVAN ALEKSONDROVICH. Good-bye. Much obliged for your hospitality. Good-bye, Anna Andreevna. Good-bye, my love.

[IVAN ALEKSONDROVICH goes out the front door, escorted by all. OSIP shoves himself out somehow. The door remains wide open. The rest of the scene takes place back of the stage.

IVAN ALEKSONDROVICH'S VOICE. Good-bye, my angel, good-bye.

ANTON ANTONOVICH'S VOICE. How's that? Going in a postchaise?

IVAN ALEKSONDROVICH'S VOICE. Oh, yes, I'm used to it.

DRIVER'S VOICE. Whoa!

ANTON ANTONOVICH'S VOICE. At least put a blanket on the seat. I'll have one brought.

IVAN ALEKSONDROVICH'S VOICE. Oh, no, I couldn't think of it. [On second thought.] Still, it wouldn't do any harm.

ANTON ANTONOVICH'S VOICE. Hey! Fetch the purple blanket with the blue border.

DRIVER'S VOICE. Whoa!

ANTON ANTONOVICH'S VOICE. When may we expect you back?

IVAN ALEKSONDROVICH'S VOICE. Oh, to-morrow—or the day after.

OSIP'S VOICE. Put the blanket here. Some hay for my seat, too.

DRIVER'S VOICE. Whoa!

OSIP'S VOICE. Little more. There, that's right.

IVAN ALEKSONDROVICH'S VOICE. Good-bye, Antonovich.

ANTON ANTONOVICH'S VOICE. Good-bye, your Excellency.

WOMEN'S VOICES. Good-bye, Ivan Aleksandrovich.

IVAN ALEKSONDROVICH'S VOICE. Good-bye, darling.

DRIVER'S VOICE. Giddap, birdies!

END OF FOURTH ACT.

ACT FIFTH.

SCENE—*The same as in Act I.*

TIME—*Late in the afternoon of the same day as Act IV.*

DISCOVERED—ANTON ANTONOVICH, ANNA ANDREEVNA,
and MARYA ANTONOVNA are in the room as the curtain goes up. SERGEANT KARPOVICH *enters soon, through the front door.*

ANTON ANTONOVICH. Well, Anna Andreevna? Ah! Our little Marya! Just think of it! What a rich prize she captured! Confess how you never even dreamt that you, as the wife of a common or garden prefect—that you'd be related to such a man!

ANNA ANDREEVNA. Not at all—I knew it right along. It surprises you because you have never even seen people in really smart society.

ANTON ANTONOVICH. I guess I can hold up my end all right, my dear. But things *are* moving just a little, aren't they? Won't I get square with two or three of my good friends! Oh, won't I! Where shall we live now, here or in St. Petersburg?

ANNA ANDREEVNA. Oh, in St. Petersburg, of course. How could we stay here?

ANTON ANTONOVICH. St. Petersburg it is, then! I think I'll give up my prefecture. What do you think, Anna Andreevna?

ANNA ANDREEVNA. Why certainly! What good will a prefecture do you now?

ANTON ANTONOVICH. No good at all! Me a prefect! *Me!* Why, do you know that this new son-in-law is friend to all the ministers? That he visits the Czar? Well, I *think* I see my son-in-law's father-in-law waking up some fine morning in a general's uniform. Eh?

ANNA ANDREEVNA. Of course you will.

ANTON ANTONOVICH. A general! Why not a knight, eh? Dining with the governor, while the prefect does guard duty. [Breaks into loud laughter with a wink in his left eye.] How's that, old lady?

ANNA ANDREEVNA. Just remember that your taste in your acquaintances is so dreadfully vulgar! When I think of you going about poisoning rabbits with the game warden! When I think of Zemlyanika! Horrors! From now on your friends must be people of rank, as befits our position. Our house in St. Petersburg must simply dazzle. [She closes her eyes.] Ah!

AMMOS FEDROVICH. [Entering, but still in the doorway.] Can I believe the good news, Anton Antonovich?

AMMOS FEDROVICH and ARTEMI FILIPPOVICH enter.

ARTEMI FILIPPOVICH. Let me congratulate you on your good fortune. I was very glad to hear it. [Shakes hands with ANNA ANDREEVNA.] Hearty congratulations, Anna Andreevna. [Shakes hands with MARYA ANTONOVNA.] My best wishes, Marya Antonovna.

IVAN LAZAREVICH. [Entering, shakes hands with all in turn.] Anton Antonovich, I congratulate you. A long life and a happy one; the same for the new couple; may your

posternity be numerous,—grandchildren and great-grandchildren. [To ANNA ANDREEVNA.] Congratulations, Anna Andreevna. [To MARYA ANTONOVNA.] Hearty congratulations, Marya Antonovna.

Enter LUKA LUKICH and his WIFE, who runs in front of him.

LUKA LUKICH'S WIFE. I congratulate you, Anna Andreevna! [Kisses her.] Oh, oh, I am so glad. So glad! They told me: "Anna Andreevna is marrying off her daughter—" "Oh, goodness gracious!" thought I, and was so glad that I said to my husband: "Listen, Luka; this is a great future for Anna Andreevna. I am so tickled that I am burning to congratulate Anna Andreevna in person. Anna Andreevna expected a particularly good match for her daughter, and now everything came out just as she wanted." Honestly, I was so glad I cried for joy. And Luka Lukich asked: "What are you sobbing for, Nasstenka?"—"Luka Lukich," I said, "I don't myself know why, but the tears are just rolling down in streams."

[*Someone is heard entering the front hall.*

ANTON ANTONOVICH. Come in!

SERGEANT KARPOVICH enters.

ANTON ANTONOVICH. Oh, it is you, Ivan Karpovich. Call the tradesmen! I'll show those rascals how to complain against me! I have been lenient with them as compared to what I am going to be. Note everyone who came to complain against me, and do not forget the scribblers who wrote

the complaints for them. And make it known to them, that, in spite of their complaints against me, the inspector will honor the prefect by marrying his daughter. Make it known everywhere, to everybody. Let the bells ring and announce the prefect's triumph!

[*The sergeant goes out through the front door.*

[*STEPAN ILICH and the sergeants enter from the right.*

STEPAN ILICH. Allow me to congratulate you, Your Honor, and to wish you a long life and prosperity!

[*MISHKA brings in more chairs.*

ANTON ANTONOVICH. Thank you, thank you! Ladies and gentlemen, please sit down.

AMMOS FEDROVICH. But tell me, please, Anton Antonovich, how did it all come about—I mean the engagement?

ANTON ANTONOVICH. Oh, in the most unusual manner; it pleased him to propose to her.

ANNA ANDREEVNA. [*Interrupting.*] In the most elegant way imaginable! He spoke so unusually nicely. He is such a grand, educated man—such an honorable man. He said: "Believe me, Anna Andreevna, my life is not worth anything: I do this out of respect to your own rare qualities!"

AMMOS FEDROVICH. Well, if you don't like that one, I may sell you another.

[*Enter STEPAN IVANOVICH and his wife, PETR IVANOVICH BOCHINSKI, PETR IVANOVICH DOCHINSKI and several guests.*

STEPAN IVANOVICH'S WIFE. Oh, you cannot imagine, Anna Andreevna, how glad I am that it so happened.

STEPAN IVANOVICH. Where is the eminent guest now? I heard he left to attend to some of his important business.

ANTON ANTONOVICH. I believe you, my boy! Important? Well, rather!

ANNA ANDREEVNA. He went to get his uncle's blessing.

ANTON ANTONOVICH. To obtain his uncle's consent; but to-morrow . . . [He sneezes. *The congratulations—“God bless you”—pour out in a chorus.*] Many thanks—he will surely be back to-morrow.

[*He sneezes again; a volley of greetings drowns all other talk.*

STEPAN ILICH. Our best wishes, Your Honor!

PETR IVANOVICH BOCHINSKI. I wish you a long life and loads of gold.

PETR IVANOVICH DOCHINSKI. May you live forever!

ANNA ANDREEVNA. We intend to live in St. Petersburg, of course. Here, I must confess, the atmosphere is too *bourgeois!* Oh, very unpleasant!—My husband will be promoted to the rank of general.

ANTON ANTONOVICH. Well, I wouldn't object seriously.

ARTEMI FILIPPOVICH. [To ANTON ANTONOVICH.] Don't forget us, when you get to be a general.

AMMOS FEDROVICH. Don't forget me when you shake the plums from the plum tree.

STEPAN IVANOVICH. I'm going to take my boy to the capital, next year, and have him enlist in the service of the state. If only you *would* be a father to him!

ANTON ANTONOVICH. I'll do my level best.

ANNA ANDREEVNA. Oh, you are always ready to promise, Anton. You won't have time to think about such things. How can you tie your hands with such promises?

ANTON ANTONOVICH. Why not, my dear? Sometimes it is possible.

ANNA ANDREEVNA. Of course, but you can't be good to a lot of nobodies!

STEPAN IVANOVICH'S WIFE. Did you hear what she called us?

A GUEST. She was always like that. Give her a chance and she'll . . .

The tradesmen enter from the door on the right.

ANTON ANTONOVICH. Hello, you vultures! You . . .

THE TRADESMEN. [Bowing low.] The Lord bless you, sir!

ANTON ANTONOVICH. [Banteringly at first.] Well, how goes it? Are the people as easy a mark as ever? [Satirically.] I suppose you thought I was in jail by this time. [Venomously.] Now you rascals, deceivers, arch-cheats, now I'll show you how to complain against me. Now I'll set seven devils and a witch against you, d——.

ANNA ANDREEVNA. [Interrupting.] Oh, what language.

ANTON ANTONOVICH. [Angrily, to his wife.] My language is all right. [To the tradesmen.] Do you know that that same officer to whom you have complained is going to marry my daughter? Now I'll go for you, you impostors! You think because you can sell sixteen samovars a day, you are somebody. I'll prove to you that your airs don't amount to a hill of beans!

THE SECOND TRADESMAN. [Bowing low.] We are guilty, Anton Antonovich; the devil tempted us. We

will never do it again. Ask for any reparation, only do not get angry.

ANTON ANTONOVICH. "Do not get angry." Now you are at my feet, why? Because I won out; but if I hadn't won, you would have downed me.

THE TRADESMEN. [*Bowing low, together.*] We beseech you, Anton Antonovich, do not ruin us!

ANTON ANTONOVICH. "Do not ruin us." "Do not ruin us." But what did you say to the inspector? Oh, I would just like . . . [*He waves his hand.*] Well, may God forgive you! I am not rancorous; but take care! I am going to marry off my daughter, and not to a poor nobleman, either. Remember the occasion, do you understand? You must do a little more than bring a sturgeon or a cone of sugar.

[IVAN KUZMICH runs in through the front door, all out of breath, with an open letter in his hand.]

IVAN KUZMICH. Ladies! Gentlemen! A most surprising piece of news! The functionary, whom we have all taken for the Czar's inspector, was not an inspector at all.

EVERYBODY ON THE STAGE. How is that? How do you know?

IVAN KUZMICH. He was no inspector; I know it from this letter. [He shows the letter.]

ANTON ANTONOVICH. What are you talking about? From what letter?

IVAN KUZMICH. From his own letter. The letter was brought to me in the post office. I looked at the address and I saw: "Pockramskaya."* I nearly dropped dead.

* "Pockramskaya" means "Post Office Street," and as a rule, officials of the department live there.



ANTON ANTONOVICH AND HIS WIFE AND DAUGHTER.



"Well," thought I, "surely he has found irregularities in the post office and is informing the authorities." I opened it immediately.

ANTON ANTONOVICH. Why did you do that?

IVAN KUZMICH. I do not know: a supernatural power possessed me. I had already summoned a special messenger to send the letter away, but my curiosity got the better of me as never before. I could not stop it; I simply could not. I was hypnotized! It seemed to me that I heard with one ear a supernatural command: "Open it! You are lost anyway"; and in the other, the devil whispered: "Open it! Open it!" and as I touched the sealing wax my blood got on fire; but when I opened it, it froze stiff—upon my word, it froze stiff. And my hands began to shake, and I became confused.

ANTON ANTONOVICH. But how did you dare to open the letter of such an official?

IVAN KUZMICH. That's just the point, he is not an official.

ANTON ANTONOVICH. Then what is he?

IVAN KUZMICH. A nothing.

ANTON ANTONOVICH. [Vehemently.] What do you mean by "a nothing?" How dare you call him "a nothing?" I put you under arrest . . .

IVAN KUZMICH. Who? You?

ANTON ANTONOVICH. Yes, I!

IVAN KUZMICH. You are not big enough!

ANTON ANTONOVICH. Are you aware of the fact that he is going to marry my daughter, that I myself am going to be a grandee, that I could nail you up in Siberia?

IVAN KUZMICH. Oh, Anton Antonovich, what are you talking about Siberia? Siberia is far off. I'd better read

the letter for you. Ladies and gentlemen, will you permit me to read the letter?

EVERYBODY ON THE STAGE. Read it, read it.

IVAN KUZMICH. [Reads.] "I hasten to inform you, my dear Tryapichkin, about the wonderful things that have happened to me since I left you. On the road, an infantry captain cheated me out of the last kopek I had, so that the innkeeper was ready to put me in jail; but unexpectedly, probably on account of my St. Petersburg physiognomy and clothes, the whole town mistook me for the Czar's right hand man. I now live in the police prefect's house, enjoying life, shouting love like a madman to his wife and daughter; I have not quite decided with which to begin. Everybody lends me money to any amount. They are characters; you would die laughing. I know you write for the press; make up a story of this and put it in some paper. First; the police prefect is as stupid as a gray donkey."

ANTON ANTONOVICH. [Provoked.] I do not believe it.

IVAN KUZMICH. [Showing the letter.] Read it yourself!

ANTON ANTONOVICH. [Reading.] "As a gray donkey"—It is impossible; you wrote this yourself.

IVAN KUZMICH. How could I write it?

ARTEMI FILIPPOVICH. Read on!

LUKA LUKICH. Read on!

IVAN KUZMICH. [Continuing to read.] "The police prefect is as stupid as a gray donkey."

ANTON ANTONOVICH. That'll do. *That will do!!*

IVAN KUZMICH. [Continuing.] Hm-hm-hm—"a gray donkey. The prefect is also a good-natured man" . . .

[He stops reading.] Here he expressed himself very impolitely about me.

ANTON ANTONOVICH. Read on. Don't stop!

IVAN KUZMICH. What for?

ARTEMI FILIPPOVICH. Permit me! [He puts on his glasses and reads:] "The postmaster is the very incarnation of the janitor Mikheev at the Chancery, and the rascal must be drinking just as heavily."

IVAN KUZMICH. [A bit aside.] The rascal! He ought to get a good licking, that's all.

ARTEMI FILIPPOVICH. [Continuing to read.] "The overseer of the charitable institutions" . . . and . . . and . . . and . . . and . . .

[He begins to stammer a bit, then stops.

STEPAN IVANOVICH. Why did you stop?

ARTEMI FILIPPOVICH. The writing is illegible—anyway, it is very apparent that he is a scamp!

STEPAN IVANOVICH. Give it to me! I think my eyes are better. [He takes the letter.

ARTEMI FILIPPOVICH. [Not giving the letter.] Well, this place can be left out. Read further on.

STEPAN IVANOVICH. Give it to me. I'll read it.

ARTEMI FILIPPOVICH. I can read it myself; further on the writing is very clear.

IVAN KUZMICH. No, you must read the whole of it. Everything was read before.

EVERYBODY ON THE STAGE. Give it up, Artemi Filippovich; give up the letter. [To STEPAN IVANOVICH.] You read it.

ARTEMI FILIPPOVICH. All right. [He gives up the letter.] Begin here.

[He covers up the spot with his fingers. Everybody on the stage goes for him.

IVAN KUZMICH. Read it. Read it! Nonsense, read it all!

STEPAN IVANOVICH. [Reading.] "The overseer of the charitable institutions, Zemlyanika, is a pig."

ARTEMI FILIPPOVICH. [Half aside; displeased.] That's not funny, one bit!

STEPAN IVANOVICH. [Continuing.] The supervisor of the schools eats garlic . . .

LUKA LUKICH. I never touch it!

AMMOS FEDROVICH. [Half aside.] Thank the Lord, there is nothing about me.

STEPAN IVANOVICH. [Reading.] "The judge" . . .

AMMOS FEDROVICH. Ladies and gentlemen, I think the letter is altogether too long; what the devil is the use of reading trash like that!

LUKA LUKICH. Oh, no!

IVAN KUZMICH. No, no, read on!

ARTEMI FILIPPOVICH. You had better continue!

STEPAN IVANOVICH. [Continuing.] "The Judge Lyapkin-Tyapkin is a monotone of the most unvaried, tiresome kind." [He stops.] This must be French!

AMMOS FEDROVICH. The devil knows what it means. Do you suppose it means anything? Worse than a rascal.

STEPAN IVANOVICH. [Continuing.] "However, they are all good-hearted and hospitable people. Good-bye, my dear Tryapichkin. Like you, I want to devote myself to literature. Life without an occupation of this sort is tedious; but if one writes, he can always pour out his soul on paper, and feel the better afterwards. I see plainly enough that I must pursue some high ideal. Write to me. [He turns the letter and reads the address.] "His Honor, Sir Ivan

*Vasillovich Tryapichkin, 97 Pachtomskaya St., St. Petersburg."

ONE OF THE LADIES. What an unexpected reprimand.

ANTON ANTONOVICH. [Nervously excited.] He certainly cut us to the quick! This is too much, altogether. He has done us! He must be caught! [Waves his hands.

IVAN KUZMICH. He cannot be caught. I gave him the best troika,† as bad luck would have it; the devil himself induced me to give it to him, even before he pronounced the order.

STEPAN IVANOVICH'S WIFE. This is the greatest mixup that ever happened!

AMMOS FEDROVICH. Mixup! He borrowed three hundred rubles of me.

ARTEMI FILIPPOVICH. He took three hundred of me!

IVAN KUZMICH. [Sighing.] Same here!

PETR IVANOVICH BOCHINSKI. And sixty-five of me and Petr Ivanovich!

AMMOS FEDROVICH. [Stretching his hands perplexedly.] How is it that we have been taken in so badly?

ANTON ANTONOVICH. [Striking himself on the forehead.] What a . . . what an old fool! I have lost my senses. Thirty years in the service, and not one merchant, not one contractor could deceive me; the swindlers of swindlers I have beaten in their own game. I have gotten the best of such sharks and cheats as the world had not seen their like; I have fooled three generals . . . [He waves his hands in disapprovement.] What's the use of mentioning generals. They are easy . . .

* This high-sounding title in general use amounts to no more than Mr. and Esq.

† Three horses abreast.

ANNA ANDREEVNA. But it is impossible, Anton; he is engaged to Marya.

ANTON ANTONOVICH. [Bitterly.] Engaged? It is an insult, not an engagement! Don't talk to me about the engagement. [Delirious.] See, see, let the whole world see, let all Christians see, what a fool the prefect has been made of! Look at the fool, the old fool and knave! [He strikes his own head with his fist.] Blockhead that I am. And I took him for a great person. Now he is riding at full speed and filling the air with the sound of bells. He will spread the story all over the world. That will hardly be the end of it; it would not stop with ridicule—some hack-writer, some penny-a-liner will put me into a play. Those literary hacks respect no rank or calling. And they will all jeer and laugh at me and tear me to pieces.

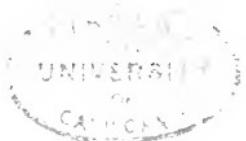
[*People on the stage laugh half aloud.*

A gendarme enters through the front door.

THE GENDARME. The functionary who came here from St. Petersburg by order of the Czar commands you to appear before him. He stopped at the hotel.

[*The announcement strikes them all like a thunderbolt. A sound of astonishment unanimously issues from the ladies' lips; the whole assembly, on account of the suddenly changed circumstances, remains standing as though petrified.*

THE END.



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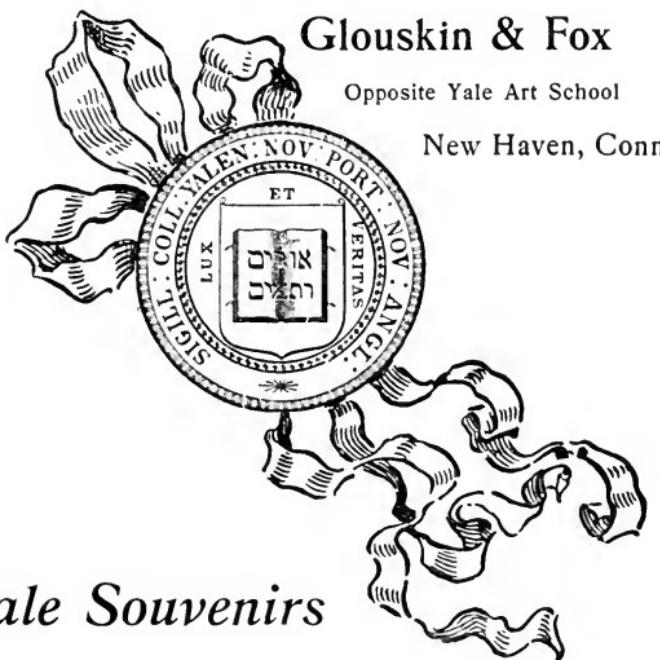
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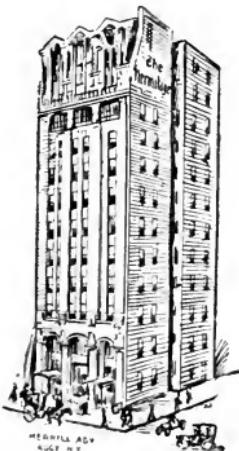
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